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The Roosevelt Program — An Attack Upon The Toiling Masses

THE rapid pace of events in the United States during the past two months emphasizes the drastic and violent measures the bourgeoisie is resorting to in its endeavor to find a solution to the ever sharpening financial and economic crisis. The havoc caused by the four-year old crisis is further increased by the recent collapse of the financial structure of American capitalism. The financial crisis has revealed with extreme severity the depth of the economic crisis and the desperate attempts of the American capitalist class to extricate itself at the expense of the masses of workers and poor farmers. The path of American capitalism leads toward a violent solution of the crisis, toward more vicious attacks upon the living conditions of the masses, toward feverish preparations for hostilities among the imperialist powers in the struggle for markets, and toward organized intervention against the Soviet Union.

In the face of all this the bourgeois economists are now forced to sing a different tune. Instead of interpreting, as they did in the past every seasonal increase in production as a turn in the tide, as an omen of coming prosperity, the bourgeois economists now call for immediate action to save dying capitalism from the impending revolution. The most characteristic of such warnings was recently made by Professor Irving Fisher, Yale economist, in a speech cited in the *New York Times* of April 23:

> "Few realize the gravity of our present situation. Our very national existence is at stake, even more than it was in the World War.
>
> "*Halfway, traditional and timid measures will no longer do.* If the price level is not speedily raised, so that business, industry and agriculture can be run at enough of a profit to make sure that they run at all and reabsorb the unemployed, and if that level is not raised enough to enable debtors to pay their debts and creditors to get their pay, *this country will soon be over the precipice with bloodshed and revolution.*
>
> "We are at war and must entrust to our Commander-in-Chief the war-time powers necessary to win this sort of war." (Our emphasis—Ed.)

This revealing utterance casts light upon the unprecedented intensity and tempo with which the government, under the leadership of Roosevelt, went into action to prop up by emergency

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measures the tottering foundation of American finance capital. In the brief space of two months, the most vicious anti-working-class program has been enacted. Through the measures of the new administration, the American workers and poor farmers, already reduced to a starvation level by the blows of the crisis, have been attacked with added severity. Roosevelt's demagogic promises of a "new deal," his electioneering solicitude for the "forgotten man" have proved to be so much sham. It is sufficient to enumerate but a few excerpts from the promises of Roosevelt to show to what lengths the bourgeoisie was forced to go in ints efforts for winning the discontented masses for its demagogic spokesman.

> October 6, in discussing the plight of the unemployed, Roosevelt stated: "We need for them a greater assurance of security. Old age, sickness and unemployment insurance are the minimum requirements in these days."
>
> October 12, he declared that he was, "...utterly unwilling that economy should be practiced at the expense of the starving people."
>
> Once again, on October 20: "If starvation and dire need on the part of any of our citizens make necessary the appropriation of additional funds which would keep the budget out of balance, I shall not hesitate to tell the American people the full truth and recommend to them the expenditure of this additional amount."
>
> The Democratic platform on which he stood included a plank: "We advocate the full measure of justice and generosity for all war veterans who have suffered disability or disease caused by or resulting from actual service in time of war and for their dependents."

Every act of the Roosevelt administration is a direct refutation of these promises, and a desperate mobilization of the whole machinery of the bourgeois State to save finance capitalism. The integration of finance capital with the bourgois State and the measures taken by Roosevelt to prevent the breakdown of the biggest financial interests furnishes a convincing proof of the correctness of the following statement from the report of Comrade Kuusinen to the Twelfth Plenum of the Communist International:

> "Today the situation is such that the very largest concerns of finance capital are mostly so closely connected with the whole machinery of state that they cannot go bankrupt and do not need to do so, since they control the state and can also mobilize its resources for their own support."

The impending financial crisis was already evident a year or two ago. The banking structure was seriously undermined by the whole course of the crisis, resulting in a huge number of bank failures, repeated stock market crashes, steady lowering of bond values, the loss of billions of dollars in mortgage values, hastening

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the present financial collapse. The Hoover administration, from the first days of the stock market crash in 1929 and through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, pumped billions of dollars into the collapsing financial structure. Similarly, the banking holiday declared by Roosevelt only two days after he became President, was directed to avoid the bankruptcy of some of the largest banks, to centralize further the control of the banking institutions into fewer hands by driving out the smaller "weaker" banks. In this process billions of dollars invested by small depositors were wiped out.

Under the Emergency Banking Bill, the President regulates credit, has full power to issue billions of dollars of new currency and to control foreign exchange transactions as completely as during the war. The collapse of the dollar in the United States, which marks the breakdown of the world's up to now most stable currency, is directed to increase domestic prices and to enable the United States to compete more effectively on the world market with England. American trade on the world market has suffered serious losses during the four years of the crisis. A recent study of the Commerce Department on American foreign trade, shows a drop in the value of exports from $5,240,995,000 in 1929 to 1,612,-306,000 in 1932. England, the chief competitor of America, was placed in a more advantageous position to undersell American goods because of the depreciation of the pound. The depreciation of the dollar is, therefore, a direct retaliation to England, aiming to undermine its trade position. This will lead to a still further aggravation of existing antagonisms between these countries, bringing these irreconcilable contradictions to a violent head—to a war in the struggle for markets.

While one of the main arguments for the devaluation of the dollar is that it will assist American foreign trade to win a larger share of the world market, in reality it will provoke counter-measures on the part of the other countries. Dumping will be met by special tariffs, and the anticipated increase in foreign trade will prove as illusory as the other Roosevelt panaceas offered as a way out of the crisis.

The widespread illusion created by the Roosevelt administration that every one of its measures is directed to "benefit" the people, will be greatly undermined when the masses fully feel the direct effects of inflation and the other acts of the government. The big financial interests will not suffer through the depreciation of the dollar. They will make even more exorbitant profits. For the masses, on the other hand, the rise in domestic prices will act as an indirect wage-cut. The dollar will buy less goods than before.

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In this manner, the standards of living of the masses will be further lowered.

The higher cost of imports due to the lowered value of the dollar will again be paid by the masses, who will be compelled to buy the goods imported from other countries at higher prices. Already inflation has brought with it a rise in prices, which will soar further as the bourgeoisie, unable through these measures to get out of the crisis, will find themselves driven to depreciate the dollar still more.

But the actions of the government do not rest with this attack upon the living standards of the workers. From the Economy Bill to the latest moves to pass the Black 30-Hour Bill and establish arbitration boards, every measure is directed to drive down still further the conditions of life of the masses.

With the promises made prior to the election still ringing in the ears of the people, Roosevelt demanded war powers to carry through emergency measures for balancing the budget and to give aid to the bankers. The Economy Bill called for a cut of $900,000,000 in the budget to be secured through a 15% slash of the wages of Federal employees and a $400,000,000 cut in the disability allowance payments to the war veterans. Tens of thousands of war veterans and their families will be affected when the Bill becomes law on July 1st. The back pay of the veterans—the Bonus—has been voted down. In addition Roosevelt has decreed a 15% cut in the pay of enlisted men who start at $21.00 a month.

The signal given by Roosevelt in the cut to the Federal employees has set into a motion a wage-slashing drive in practically all industries. This is admitted by the Kiplinger Letter of March 25th, which in discussing wages states:

> "All indications are that these will further trend down. Railroads probably will succeed in reducing wages more than the present 10 per cent after midyear. . . . Miss Perkins, Secretary of Labor, now seems to be preparing the groundwork. . . . Implications in Roosevelt's new unemployment program are . . . not in the direction of trying to maintain wage standards for the present."

The words of Roosevelt promising not to carry through economy measures at the expense of the starving workers have been translated into deeds which place the entire burden of the present situation upon the shoulders of the masses.

To stifle the growing demand for unemployment insurance and to cover up the concerted drive against the workers, the Roosevelt administration has produced an "unemployed program" directed to "relieve" unemployment. Part of this program now being put into practice calls for the mobilization of 250,000 unemployed

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workers in "civil conservation corps" under military supervision at the army pay of $1 a day. Out of 17,000,000 unemployed, 250,000 will be given a taste of Roosevelt's "relief." This move on the part of the administration is hailed by the Whaley-Eaton Service of Washington in its confidential American business letter of March 25th as a signal for lowering wages:

> "Nothing could be more significant than the President's plan to pay $1 a day only to men employed in the reforestation program. It kicks over the whole practice of wage maintenance as applied to relief work. This trend to make a relief scheme practicable, not only from the viewpoint of cost but also in regard to drawing men from other work into government employ. It is one of the most important decisions the government has made."

Under the guise of a vast public program, the Roosevelt administration is inaugurating the heaviest Navy Construction Program yet proposed. The army and navy appropriations for 1933-34 amounts to $565,000,000. The proposed public works program offered by Roosevelt calls not for public works to eliminate slums, to build hospitals, to establish playgrounds, but provides instead for the building of 30 additional war ships of various types at a total cost of $230,000,000. Both unemployed measures are therefore direct steps in the preparations for war—one to establish a vast army and the other to build a Navy second to none.

That the Roosevelt administration does not intend to fulfill its pre-election promise for employment insurance is seen in the discussions for the Black 30-Hour week Bill which is an attempt to "legalize" the stagger system, placing the burden of maintaining a section of the unemployed on those still fortunate enough to have jobs. No more talk of immediate unemployment relief, let alone unemployment insurance, so glibly proposed by Roosevelt prior to his election. Instead, the proposed Black Bill is demagogically presented as a means to re-employ six million of the present army of unemployed. This will not only fail to solve the widespread unemployment, but will even be a means through which to cut down further the existing wages of the workers still employed. The Bill does not guarantee that there will be no reduction in pay with the shorter work-week, but instead proposes a minimum wage law which, without this guarantee, will drive down the wages of the workers to a new low standard. Even the financial editor of the reactionary *New York Evening Post* is forced to state that "The Black Bill will not help":

> "The net result of such a law, therefore, in the majority of cases would be that those who today work would have the burden placed upon them of carrying those who now are unemployed. Such a bill would mean not that industry is providing for the

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unemployed but that laborers themselves are meeting this charge.

"Of more significance, however, is the fact that such a wider distribution of the existing wage would have the inevitable effect of lowering the standard of living of the American workers."

In addition the bill for the shorter work-day and the minimum wage law propose the establishment of industrial boards under the control of the federal government to control production, to determine hours of labor and rate of pay, etc. and in actuality will serve as a means to enforce the Roosevelt program.

Roosevelt's Farm Bill does not aim to alleviate the plight of the farming masses. The annual estimate of the Department of Agriculture reveals the plight of the poor farmer. The gross income of the farmers fell $6,775,000,000, or 57 per cent, from 1929 through 1932 to $5,143,000,000—the lowest figure on record. The cash income of the farmers after deducting various production expenditures declined about 72% or $3,400,000,000. In addition the farmers, burdened with the tremendous debt of $12,000,000,000, with increasing taxes which have risen 260% over that of 1914, with prices of farm products still going down, have been reduced to dire poverty. To offset the growing movement against foreclosures, and to stop the "penny sales", the insurance companies were forced to grant a moratorium on mortgages. Through the Farm Bill, the Roosevelt government now comes to the aid of the mortage holders, the marketing trusts and the big farmers. The provision to place a tax on farm products will increase the price of foodstuffs for the consumers (the urban masses) and this increase will be pocketed not by the poor farmers but by the kulaks, the bankers and the mortgage companies. Furthermore, the Roosevelt government, through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, proposes to take over $2,000,000,000 of the $12,000,000,000 of the farmers' debts, thereby relieving the bankers and insurance companies of the "frozen" mortgages.

Every force of united working class resistance must be mobilized to fight against this attack upon the living conditions of the masses. The Party, as never before, must assume the leadership of the masses in the factories, among the unemployed, in the rural areas—enlightening the masses step by step as to the essence of the Roosevelt program, rallying them to action to resist the enforcement of these measures.

The need for united struggle today is greater than even before. But it is not sufficient to issue calls to the leadership of the Socialist and other reformist organizations. The fight for unity in the struggle against the capitalist offensive, must be based on systematic

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activity in the factories, in the neighborhoods, whereever the workers are found developing strike actions for wage increases to meet rising prices; extending the movement for unemployment insurance and against the forced labor schemes; organizing an active fight against political reaction and the war preparations.

The treacheries of the leaders of the Socialist Party, and the Greens and Wolls of the A. F. of L. are seen in their open or tacit support of the anti-working class program of the Roosevelt administration. Just as in 1929, Green pledged the support of organized labor to the Hoover drive against the workers, so today, he calls the workers to practice "self-imposed restraint and discipline", adding:

> "No good purpose will be served but instead great injury may be done if, at the moment, labor would substitute feeling for common sense and ill-advised action for sound judgement."

Both the Greens and the Wolls hailed the Black Bill; and Thomas in the April 15th *New Leader* states:

> "The passage of the Black 30-hour week Bill by the United States is a real step forward in the struggle against unemployment, particularly technological unemployment."

While giving support to the Bill, Thomas still mouths phrases about unemployment insurance and Green has already forgotten the decisions of the last A. F. of L. convention.

The explanation of the support of the Roosevelt program by the Socialist and A. F. of L. leadership is found in a statement by Hillquit during the debate with Senator Robinson:

> "No, we are not seeking to substitute anything for the American republic. We want to keep, preserve and improve the American republic. The changes we propose do not look for the destruction of our republic but to eradicate the abuses from which we suffer."

That is, stifle the revolutionary activity of the masses, prevent the united front, chain the masses ever firmer to the national bourgeoisie. This is their aim. The Communist Party, if it is to win the masses for the decisive struggle for power, must be in the vanguard of the fight to establish the unity of the masses in the struggle against every attack. The American workers and poor farmers will learn through their experience in these struggles who are their friends and enemies and will rally in everincreasing numbers under the leadership of the Communist Party, steeled in the struggle, and prepared to give the final blow to capitalism.

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Maneuvers To Sabotage a United Front of Struggle

By C. A. HATHAWAY

OVER a month has elapsed since the Central Committee of the Communist Party, acting in accord with the proposals of the Communist International addressed a call to the American Federation of Labor, the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, and the Socialist Party, urging joint efforts to mobilize the masses for united struggle against Roosevelt's "new deal," against fascism, and against war. We can now take stock of the developments.

These experiences already make clear the character of the varied manoeuvers to avoid *a real fighting unity* of the masses which can be expected from the various reformist groups—the "old guard" and the "militants" in the Socialist Party, the C.P.L.A., etc. An understanding of these maneuvers is necessary to avoid "right" and "left" deviations in the application of our united front policies.

The first error that must be avoided is the assumption that the various reformist leaders and groups have changed their position overnight, i.e. that they have ceased to be reformist agents of the bosses in the workers' ranks and have become persons ready to organize and lead the masses in real class battles for their needs. It is particularly necessary to sound this note of warning with regard to the S. P. "militants." They have not shown even symptoms of such a basic change.

In this connection it is well to recall the openly expressed doubts and suspicions of the Communist International as to the sincerity of the Labor and Socialist International in its proposals for a united front with the Communists against fascism. In its manifesto, which was the basis for our united front proposals, the C.I. stated:

> "The Bureau of the Labor and Socialist International published on February 19 last a declaration on the readiness of the social democratic parties affiliated to this International to form a united front with the Communists in order to fight against the fascist reaction in Germany. *This declaration stands in sharp contradiction to the whole of the previous actions of the L.S.I. and social democratic parties. The whole policy and activity of the L.S.I. hitherto justifies the Communist International and the Communist*

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> *Parties in putting no faith in the sincerity of the declaration of the L.S.I. Bureau, which makes its proposal at a moment when in a number of countries, and before all in Germany, the working masses are taking into their own hands the organizing of the united front.* In spite of this, however, the Executive Committee of the Communist International, in view of fascism, which is unchaining all the forces of world reaction against the working class of Germany, calls upon all Communist Parties to make yet another attempt to set up the united front of struggle *with the social democratic workers through the medium of the social democratic parties.* The E.C.C.I. makes this attempt in the firm conviction that the united front of the working class, on the basis of the class struggle, will be able to repel the offensive of capital and fascism and to accelerate extraordinary the inevitable end of all capitalist exploitation." (My emphasis, C. A. H.)

This declaration on the great significance of united action, and of "*no faith*" in the reformist leaders has been more than justified by events. In no case—not even in those cases where the proposals for united action have been formally accepted—have the reformist leaders joined with the Communists in urging the masses of the unemployed, the workers in the factories, and the trade union workers to unite in common struggle against the bourgeois attacks, regardless of their political beliefs or affiliations. *Only such efforts toward unity, efforts that result in bringing the Communist, Socialist and non-Party workers together on the basis of the class struggle in the factories, in the unions, and at the relief bureaus, can be considered really sincere efforts to strengthen the fighting front of the masses.* And such a policy these leaders do not accept.

In the United States, the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. has failed to reply to the Communist proposals. The Socialist Party executive replied, but rejected the united front offer. The C. P. L A accepted the proposal for united action *in words*, but *in deeds* occupies a typical centrist position, keeping one foot firmly planted in the camp of those opposing united action, while making gestures with the other foot toward those supporting the Communist proposals.

We will explain more fully the position of these organizations, beginning with the Socialist Party. On April 17, Clarence Senior, the Executive Secretary of the Socialist Party, sent the following letter to the Communist Party:

> "The national executive committee has voted to comply with the request of the Labor and Socialist International not to enter into united front negotiations with national sections of the Communist International until the L.S.I. and the Comintern have reached an agreement for an international united front." (Quoted in full—C. A. H.)

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This reply represents the particular manoeuver of the majority of the Socialist executive, the "old guard," which is in line with the international manoeuver adopted by the L. S. I., to ward off the Communist proposals. According to reports in the Socialist press this decision was adopted by a very narrow margin, by a vote of 6 to 5. Hillquit, Graham, Hoan, McLevy, Packard and Wilson —the "old guard" in the executive, supported this action. The "militants"—Thomas, Coolidge, Hapgood, Hoopes, and Krzycki —voted for "negotiations" with a committee of the Communist Party. But these "differences," as we shall show, represent only tactical differences *on how best to reject the united front proposals.*

These differences arise from the difficult position the reformist leaders find themselves in, and not from any fundamental differences as to policies or tactics. The masses, under the blows of Roosevelt's attacks on their living standards—veterans' relief cut, wage cuts, forced labor, banking policies, inflation, war preparations, etc.—are more and more being aroused. The illusions of a "new deal" in the interests of the "forgotten man,"—which were widespread following Roosevelt's election—are being rapidly dispelled. The mood for struggle among the masses is rising, and with it an urge for unity to an extent never before known. Every working-class body, and not the least the Socialist Party, is affected by this rising urge for united struggle.

The reformist leaders, so far as possible, are anxious to avoid active mass struggles. They aim to confine the activities of the masses to "legal," parliamentary activities. Particularly, they are opposed to throwing the masses of workers together,—Socialist, Communist, and non-Party—in strikes and demonstrations where they have an opportunity to experience the contrast between Communist leadership, following the line of class struggle, and reformist leadership, following the line of class collaboration.

Their manoeuvers, therefore, in relation to the Communist proposal revolve around the question,—"how can we *reject* these proposals for real united action *without loosing our following* which to an increasing extent favors such united action?" In answering this question the "differences" between the "old guard" and "militants" arise.

The Hillquit group answers the question very simply. They say, reject the proposals on the trumped-up charge that the Communists are "insincere" and that it is necessary to wait for action by the L. S. I. Their manoeuvres are best shown by resolutions on the united front adopted in New York where the "old guard" is completely in control. In the *New Leader* of April 8, the following report is given as the reply of the united front conference,

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initiated by the Socialist Party, to the proposal of the committee representing the Communist Party for a real united front of struggle against fascism:

> "In answer to a request by a committee of the Communist Party for a so-called 'united front' against fascism, *the Conference stated that it lacked authority from any of its national and international parent bodies* to unite with a party which, while making gestures in the direction of a united front, has since its inception followed a policy of disuniting and disrupting the laboring elements of the world. *As soon as the Communist Party 'discontinues its policy of destruction of our united international strength, a united front will be possible not only against fascism but against all the forces of capitalism which are grinding down the strength of labor.'* " (My emphasis—C. A. H.)

The City Convention of the Socialist Party, reported in the *New Leader* of the same date, adopted a resolution on the united front which contains the following:

> "The City Convention reaffirms the statement of the City Executive Committee, adopted March 22, which calls the attention of the Party to the fact that *a real united front is possible only on an international basis.* The City Convention therefore calls upon all Party members and branches and friendly organizations not to join any so-called united front with the Communist Party or with any of the various Communist organizations *until the Labor and Socialist International and our own National Executive Committee have acted upon and approved this proposition.* Our aim must be a real united front *with the organized workers* on a basis of mutual understanding and trust. Such united action would bring immediate benefits to the unions and to the working class in general." (My emphasis—C. A. H.)

In both of these statements, while insisting on an "international basis" for united action and slanderously asserting that the Communists have followed "a policy of disuniting and disrupting the laboring elements of the world," they are forced to hold out the hope of united action to their own members and sympathizers, because even they realize that every day, by one act after another, the Communists are convincing the Socialist workers that not only are they sincere in the proposals for united action, but that they alone are organizing and leading the fight for the workers' needs. In the convention resolution, therefore, they try to turn the desire for unity in other directions; they try to direct the hopes of he members for united struggle toward "*the organized workers*," which for the Socialist leaders means a united front with Green, Woll & Co.—a united front *toward the right* in order to stop the drift of the Socialist workers *toward the left.*

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But, while appearing effective on paper, this line of policy does not satisfy the members of the Party, nor the workers until now, sympathetic to the S. P. The more conscious Socialist workers have no confidence in Green and Woll; furthermore they are tired of delay. To begin with, they were ready to wait for the Labor and Socialist International, because they thought that the L. S. I., having proposed united action, would promptly accept the Communist International's proposals. They for a time accepted the advice of the L. S I, "not to enter into separate negotiations" under the illusion that directives for a united front of struggle would soon be given. They expected action at the executive meeting of the L. S. I. at Zurich on March 18 and 19; they expected action by the Bureau at its Paris meeting on March 26. But no action came; only an announcement that at the next executive meeting in June, (!) 1933, they will "investigate the circumstances that have led to the success of fascism in Germany," and "examine the whole strategy and tactics of the international labor movement." Even the hitherto loyal advocates of strict Party discipline among the Socialist workers began to waver; numerous individual members and branches began to disregard the advice to "wait"; they began to join in united struggle on local issues.

The Scottsboro case, the Mooney Congress, May Day, the actions against Hitler, etc., in all of which the Communists followed an aggressive line for united action, which convinced hundreds of Socialist workers of our sincere desire for unity at a time when the Socialist leaders were sabotaging united action, served to further the conviction among growing numbers of Socialist workers that united action would have to be achieved in the factories, the trade unions and at the relief bureaus by the workers themselves, and despite the open sabotage of their leaders.

It is this leftward development among the workers that caused the "militants," headed by Norman Thomas, to oppose "vigorously" the line of Hillquit, and even to discuss Communist proposals, through the medium of Muste, for the Free-Tom-Mooney Congress. The vote taken by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party was a mail vote; i.e. each member sent in his vote by mail to gether with his reasons for voting as he did. Hillquit, in his letter, set forth the position attributed to him above, and concluded with the ultimatum, that "if the present motion passes I shall not see my way clear to serve on the proposed sub-committee" to confer with the Communist Party.

But the "militants" were afraid of the consequences of such a "diehard" line; they were afraid that the members and branches could not be held in check. They voted for "negotiations" with

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the Communists, not because they wanted united action, but because they hoped through such negotiations to convince their wavering members that unity with Communists was impossible. Through "negotiations" they hoped to fix the blame for the continued split in the workers' ranks on us. This is shown by the statements of the "militants" which accompanied their votes. Coolidge, the N. E. C. member from Massachusetts, says, "to refuse the proposal would give Communist leaders more ammunition with which to attack us . . . *the younger generations of both sides are showing tendencies to fraternize*, disregarding the feud among their elders."

Hoopes, of Pennsylvania, voted for united front negotiations because, "The Communists have become more active in various places recently, particularly in Philadelphia and here (Reading—C. A. H.). In Philadelphia *they are sending members into every Socialist meeting with typewritten questions concerning the actions of European Socialists* and on other matters entirely foreign to the discussion which precedes (such as the 'united front,' we suppose—C. A. H.) . . . Here in Reading they have been trying the united front tactics recently, and when the Local (the city organization—C. A. H.) refuses, they go around to every branch with their proposal. . . . We definitely turned them down and instructed all branches to turn any communications which they receive over to our executive committee *without reading* at the branch meetings. *This was to prevent lengthy discussions on Communist tactics at every meeting, which has been the case for the last month.*" So, in order to prevent discussions leading to actual united struggles among the workers, Mr. Hoopes is for "negotiations" at the top designed to secure a non-aggression pact, or, failing in that, to discredit the Communist proposals as "insincere." This he makes clear in the next sentence. "We certainly cannot cooperate," he says, "with a group unless such tactics are absolutely forbidden, and frankly, I would be afraid to trust them if they promised to stop, for with them the keeping of a promise is merely evidence of bourgeoisie ethics." But he votes for "negotiations," hoping thereby to be able to discredit us.

But Norman Thomas puts the case for the "militants" most clearly. His letter as sent out by the Socialist N. E. C. reads:

> "I am voting *Yes* on Comrade Krzycki's motion for the appointment of a sub-committee to discuss with the sub-committee of the Communist Party the question of united front. I cannot too strongly urge the adoption of this proposal. *I have recently been traveling rather extensively in New England and elsewhere and know that in our own Party and outside of it we shall suffer very considerable harm if we can be made to appear to be blocking any*

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> *kind of united front action.* Frankly, I am skeptical whether the Communists will undertake united action on honorable terms. *But for the sake of our own members, especially our younger people, it must be made obvious that it is they who sabotage the united front, not we who disdainfully reject it.* If a united front can be had on specific issues without compromizing our essential policy it will be an enormous boon. Personally I should like to see that united front tried out on certain designated specific matters. Then we could tell better how far to go. If there were time to reconstitute the Mooney committee, somewhat to shorten the time of the Mooney Conference, and to make sure delegates were chosen fairly that might be a good occasion for practicing the united front." (My emphasis—C. A. H.)

This letter exposes fully the manoeuvres of the "militants." They are opposed to Hillquit's refusal to confer with the Communist committee, because, as Thomas here states, "in our own Party and outside of it we shall suffer very considerable harm *if we can be made to appear to be blocking any kind of united front action.*" No concern for the interests of the masses; no thought of how the mass resistance to the bosses' attacks can be made more effective, these burning issues do not concern the so-called "militants" of the Socialist Party. Their only concern is appearances,—some method by which they can fool the masses into believing that they are *for* some form of united action that *they really oppose.* With that end in view they have hit on the idea of "negotiations" with the Communists, where, as Thomas says, "*it must be made obvious that it is they who sabotage the united front, not we who disdainfully reject it.*" Their differences with Hillquit then consist only in this: Hillquit proposes openly to reject the united front proposals; Thomas also considers it necessary to reject them, but only after certain manoeuvres have been conducted in an effort to save the faces of the Socialist leaders.

Norman Thomas, however, says he is *really* ready to enter into united front actions with the Communists providing they can get "honorable terms" and "without compromizing our (the Socialists') essential policy." So far as terms are concerned we can promise Mr. Thomas the most honorable terms, namely *the unqualified acceptance* (by the Socialists and by us) *of the principles of class struggle laid down by Marx and Lenin.* As for the question of the "essential policy" of the Socialist Party, if that means their policy of class collaboration (which it does!), then it will have to be scrapped, and the policy of class struggle adopted as a prerequisite for a united front.

Mr. Thomas must understand that we Communists do not make a fetish of unity; we are not for unity in the abstract; *we*

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are for a united struggle against the bourgeoisie. Merely for Socialists and Communists to get together in the same hall, or even to meet together jointly in a conference (for example the Mooney Congress) would have no significance for the workers. The mere holding of the Mooney Congress could not possibly secure the release of Mooney; that can only be accomplished by a policy of mass struggle which must be organized at the Congress. We must come together therefore, for a purpose, for the purpose of jointly organizing *the mass resistance* to Roosevelt's program, against fascism (in Germany and here), and against war etc. Such united action is in the interests of the masses.

> "The negotiations between the parties concluding such (a united front) agreement," declares the Comintern in its manifesto, "must be based on the most elementary prerequisites for the common fight. *Without a concrete program of action against the bourgeoisie any agreement between the parties would be directed against the interests of the working class.*"

It would be easy to form a "united front," with the Socialist leaders or for that matter with Republicans and Democrats, if it were only necessary to agree not to disagree. Socialist speakers without number will gladly agree to speak at Communist meetings, expounding, of course, their own particular theories; all we have to do is to organize the meetings; rally the masses, pay the expenses, and agree not to criticize or attack their anti-working class, class-collaboration proposals—such an offer might meet Mr. Thomas's demand for "honorable terms"! But such terms we do not offer.

We put forward our terms in the statement of the Central Committee mailed to the Socialist Party on March 29; these are terms which can be accepted by any organization really concerned with the present plight of the workers, and desiring a fundamental change. The following, are the proposals which we put forward:

> "It is a life and death question for the toiling masses to form a *united front of struggle* against the capitalist attack on their living standard, against the growing bloody fascist terror, and against the acute danger of war. . . .
>
> "Such a united effort in order to be beneficial to the workers must necessarily be made *on the basis of active mass struggle* for such clear working class demands as the following:
>
> "1) Against Roosevelt's hunger and war program; against forced labor; against wage-cuts; for increased wages to meet rising prices; for adequate relief for the unemployed without discrimination against Negro or foreign born; for shorter hours without reduction in pay; and for relief for the small farmers.

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"2) For federal unemployment insurance; against the proposed unemployment 'reserves' bills.

"3) For the workers' rights, for the release of Tom Mooney, the Scottsboro boys, and all political prisoners; against police terror, against deportations, and against injunctions in labor disputes.

"4) Against fascist terror and anti-Semitism in Germany; for the release of Thaelman and of all imprisoned anti-fascist forces for material support to the revolutionary movement of Germany.

"5) For the immediate withdrawal of the Japanese forces from China, for the defense of the Chinese people, for the stopping of munition shipments to Japan; against the imperialist-war policy of Wall Street particularly now in the Far East and in Latin America.

"6) For the recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States; against imperialist attacks on the Soviet Union.

"The realization of these general demands requires *the immediate taking up of a united struggle to restore the wages of the miners, the steel workers, the auto, textile and all other workers.* It means to prepare to win back the wage cut put over on the *railroad workers.* It means support to all workers now carrying on a fight for improved conditions. It necessitates the development of *the broadest mass actions* against the Roosevelt forced labor and economy measures, for federal aid to the unemployed and for unemployment insurance."

Obviously, the realization of such a program requires more than here and there a joint meeting, or now and then a joint conference to adopt a resolution or two. Meetings, conferences, etc., only have value to the workers if they result in the setting up of joint committees of action in the factories, joint action committees in the neighborhood, joint defense bodies, etc., on a thoroughly democratic basis, which will actively resist the attacks of the bosses and prepare and lead the fight for improved conditions. Only such united action is beneficial to the workers. These were our proposals to the reformist bodies.

These proposals were rejected by the A. F. of L. executive council; they were rejected by the Socialist Party national committee. They were rejected, not because these bodies "distrust the Communists," but because they are opposed to these proposals. They are against these proposed demands, and particularly, they are against the policy of active class struggle in the factories, in the neighborhoods, and generally against the bourgeoisie. They, as in Europe, with the use of a skilful social-demagogy, strive to break the resistance of the masses to the bourgeois attacks, and behind the cloak of the "lesser evil" theory, they pave the way for the fascist form of capitalist dictatorship.

What is the role of the C. P. L. A. in these developments? Theirs, as we stated above, is a typical centrist position. In reply

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to the Communist proposals, they did not agree to meet with a subcommittee of the Communist Party to work out joint steps in the mobilization of the masses for common struggle. They have not even formally replied to the Central Committee letter. Their policy has been to participate both in conferences called by the Communists and in those called by the Socialists. They sent a statement to be read at a huge Madison Square Garden protest against fascism, but they took no part in the preparation of that meeting. They participated in the New York Free-Tom-Mooney Conference, and in certain preparatory work for the Chicago Congress. In the preparation for May Day in New York, although invited, they did not participate in the united front conference called by us. On the contrary, they organized a Provisional United Front May Day Committee of their own, composed of representatives of a half dozen or so small groups. This was done, on one hand, to give them greater bargaining power with us, and on the other hand—and chiefly—because they hesitate to take a clear cut stand with us in the organization of united mass struggles.

As a result, in the May Day preparations, for example, they contributed little or nothing, beyond bringing their own small groups, to the mass mobilization. On the contrary, their centrist maneuvering weakened the drive to force the issue of the united front in a more decisive manner in the Socialist ranks. This position of theirs arises from their agreement on fundamentals with the so-called "militants" of the Socialist Party. While they will readily agree to criticize them on one or another point, they believe that this group is really a leftward moving group, and is the vehicle through which united action can be achieved. They are aiming through their position to prevent the leftward moving rank and file within the Socialist Party from coming closer to the Communist Party. They instead wish to effect a middle crystallization similar to the I. L. P. in England. In short, their whole policy is directed towards rallying around them the elements who oppose the Socialist Party and prevent them from going over to Communism. The role of these groups must be understood in the light of the history of the formation and liquidation of the Two-and-a-half International back into the Second International in the early twenties and the liquidation of the German Socialist Labor Party back into the Social Democratic Party at the present time.

Regarding the A. F. of L. leadership we wish here only to state that even Green, Woll & Co., could not entirely ignore the united front appeal, although they did not send an official reply. In the last issue of the *Federation News*, they have printed a slanderous editorial accusing the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. with

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aiming to wreck the trade unions. This is their answer. These gentlemen who are expelling hundreds of thousands of unemployed, who are expelling militant rank and file leaders, who have converted the unions into class-collaboration agencies of the bosses, who have and are wrecking the unions, accuse us of this. The masses in the A. F. of L. are daily learning through their own experience that our aim is to organize the rank and file in the trade unions for struggle against the capitalist attacks, and that this can only be done over the heads of the—the Greens and Wolls.

In a second article we shall deal with what is going on below in the Socialist Party and A. F. of L. This will explain the maneuvers the reformists are compelled to make.

"The Communist International openly announces to the millions of workers of the whole world that there cannot be genuine working class unity without a struggle for the violent overthrow of the whole existing capitalist order, for the establishment of proletarian dictatorship.

"The proletariat will restore revolutionary unity as a class by extensive mass strikes against wage cuts and for increased pay by the struggle for the 7-hour day without wage-cuts, for immediate aid for unemployed, for social insurance at the expense of the capitalists.

"The proletariat will strengthen and extend its unity in the political arena by its political actions against fascist terror and in defense of its press, its political rights and class organization.

"The proletariat will widen its revolutionary front and include basic masses of the farmers by its valiant defense of the demands of ruined farmers, by a struggle for immediate assistance for them at the expense of the large landholders and capitalists, by the struggle for the annulment of debts and for the exemption of farmers from taxation."

—From the May First Manifesto of the COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL."

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The Scottsboro Struggle

By JAMES S. ALLEN

I.

SOUTHERN lynch justice has again spoken, in a new tone but with the same meaning. Heywood Patterson, first of the Scottsboro boys to come up for a new trial, has again been sentenced to the electric chair by the lynch court in Decatur, Alabama.

Between the original trial at Scottsboro and the Decatur farce, two years of mass protest had intervened. This movement had already succeeded not only in changing the tone in which Southern lynch justice pronounced its grinning sentence, but in forcing into the open a number of issues basic to the Negro liberation struggle. Without this movement the trial at Decatur would have been impossible; it would have been impossible to have carried through such a consistent struggle for Negroes on the jury, typifying the struggle for the whole range of democratic rights for the Negro people. Southern lynch justice had been forced to the position where it had to permit not only the presentation of evidence showing the boys to be innocent, but a direct frontal attack in one of its own lynch courts against the system of national oppression, in this instance, characterized by the exclusion of Negroes from jury service.

The trial at Decatur registered the fact that the Scottsboro movement had reached a new and higher stage. At Scottsboro, before any mass protest could gather strength, the Southern ruling class attempted an open, brazen and unashamed legal lynching. At Decatur it had already been forced into the position where it attempted to carry through a quiet, respectable, "impartial" legal lynching, camouflaged by a farcical design of deliberation and fairness. In this way, it was hoped to defend lynch justice against nation-wide and international accusation, by creating the impression that the sentence had been honestly and fairly arrived at after the defense had received every opportunity to present its evidence. Judge Horton was the highest expression of this new maneuver that the Southern ruling class had been forced to take by the mass movement. He was *the* official lyncher for the Scottsboro bourbons, dressed in sheep's clothing to hide the fangs of lynch justice.

But the meaning of the sentence is unmistakable. It is a lynch sentence meant at one and the same time to justify the system

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which produced Scottsboro and to serve as a warning to the millions of Negro people that they dare not challenge Jim-Crow, class justice. It is meant to quench the gathering struggles of the black and white masses against the capitalist offensive of hunger, war and national persecution. It is a challenge to the masses of Negro people and white toilers. Precisely in this light has it been accepted by the masses. Instead of crushing the movement, it has served as a powerful stimulus for the struggle around Scottsboro. It has set large sectors of the masses into motion, not only for the freedom of the nine innocent Negro boys, but against the whole system of national oppression which Scottsboro symbolizes.

Within an hour after the announcement of the verdict, tens of thousands of men, women and children in Negro districts of cities throughout the country swarmed into the streets. The tremendous élan of the movement was manifested by the response of the Harlem population, which in several days produced 50,000 protest signatures calling for a march on Washington. It was shown by the impromptu demonstrations of thousands of black and white people on the occasion of the arrival of the leading defense attorney and of Mrs. Patterson. The same élan marked the movement in other cities, even in Richmond, Virginia, where the slogan of the march on Washington was immediately picked up, and where, on the impetus of the movement, a committee of 100 was formed to demand democratic rights for Negroes. The promptness with which the Negro masses had grasped the broader issues at stake was shown by these actions. In the deep South, while the response of the Negro masses was necessarily more restrained, there was a profound stirring characterized by the action of Negro workers on a Birmingham city relief job, who, during the course of the first week of the trial when the question of Negroes on the jury was being argued, demanded of their foreman that they get wages equal to those of the whites on the same job.

These and similar actions by the Negro masses, and also large portions of white workers in the North, were to all appearances spontaneous. The sweep of the movement indicated the mass resentment, bursting through many pre-conceived limitations and for the most part taking its own form as it went along. It must be understood that the two-year long movement led by the Communist Party and the International Labor Defense had to a large measure prepared the ground for just such actions.

The masses are in motion, not only for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys but also for their constitutional rights. The demand for the march on Washington arose from the masses, although it was immediately picked up by the owner of the *Amsterdam*

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News, a Harlem newspaper. The Party and the I.L.D., reacting immediately to this spontaneous demand of the masses, became the organizers of this march through the various united front bodies set up around the Scottsboro case. Seizing upon this spontaneous act, the Party saved it from sizzling out in harmless signature signing and declarations, by immediately giving it an aim and purpose in correspondence with this new level in the mass movement. The Bill of Rights borne to Washington by this march, is the expression of the broad social and political issues already raised in the Scottsboro movement, and confronts the Roosevelt administration squarely with the demand to enforce the Constitutional Amendments which have remained dead letters since Reconstruction.

II.

The rapidity with which the Negro masses were aroused and large sections of them set into motion, reveals how deeply the roots of Scottsboro are embedded in the conditions of national oppression of the Negro people. All strata of the Negro population are directly involved and concerned in the case. The issues raised have gone far beyond the narrow scope of just one outstanding and dramatic instance of national oppression. The Scottsboro boys have become symbolic of the oppression of the Negroes and, even more, of the fight against that oppression.

Scottsboro has kindled the will to struggle of the Negro people. The Scottsboro case is fast becoming the pivotal point for the development of the struggle for Negro liberation. The issues involved in the Scottsboro case—those which have already come to the surface and those still present only potentially—encompass *all* the issues raised in the struggle for Negro liberation. Upon the rapidity with which the broad sections of the Negro masses are swept into motion will depend the rapidity with which all issues basic to the Negro liberation struggle will be raised.

From the very first day, the Scottsboro case had already ceased to be an isolated event, disconnected from the varied grievances of the Negro people. Because of the charge of rape, the circumstances connected with the arrest and trial of the Negro boys, the case symbolized from its inception the social oppression of the Negroes. As the mass movement under Communist leadership proceeded, sharpening the issues which the ruling class hoped to stifle, and rousing the resistance of the Negro masses, the Scottsboro struggle quickly began to assume the character of a major challenge to the lynch law system. The pet rape device hallowed by a century of lynching was being stripped of its effectiveness; the denial of the charges of a white woman—so that the world could hear, and

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particularly the white masses could hear,—was an unpardonable sin. And to cap the climax the raising of the issue of the denial of the democratic rights to the Negro masses in the South epitomized by the struggle for the right of Negroes to sit on juries, was striking at one of the most vulnerable points in the system of social exclusion which had been built up after years of bitter struggle and with great difficulty.

The trial at Decatur released the flood which had been accumulating over two years of the mass defense movement. The courtroom was a stage upon which was being paraded the system of "white superiority" forced out in its full regalia by the persistent drive of the defense movement. The challenge of this by the defense, the courage of the local Negroes who came to testify, the fact that two Southern whites appeared as the star witnesses for the defense—all of which were the results of the two-year pitiless mass pounding — produced the effect of releasing the accumulated resentment and anger of the Negro people. The very fact that such broad strata of the Negroes were set into motion was in itself raising issues peculiar to these strata and the conditions under which they lived, and creating the conditions for the raising of further issues.

The Scottsboro case is proving to be one of those instances of national oppression, which, as Lenin pointed out, can well arouse all the potential revolutionary force of an oppressed people. What Lenin has pointed out in respect to oppressed peoples in general, has special significance for the American Negroes due to the sharp character of their social oppression and the long historical accumulation of issues which have never been solved. The paramount issues of equal rights, land, political freedom—not to go beyond the democratic questions involved—have been presented for revolutionary solution before. They were the core of the period of Reconstruction following the Civil War and after a temporary highly uncertain solution were again dissolved and have been permitted to hang fire ever since. The Scottsboro case is serving as the lighting rod signalling with a flash each one of these issues as they strike anew.

History never says the same thing twice in exactly the same tone. Although the South is again beginning to speak of "State Rights," recalling the slave and Civil War periods, and "land and freedom" is the slogan which the Negro peasant masses are beginning to grasp as their own, these words are uttered with a new force and have a different meaning due to the full historic period which has intervened. The issues left unsolved by a previous revolution have been taken to the bosom of the modern, proletarian move-

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ment. The leadership of the struggle for Negro rights has gone to the Communist Party, signifying the helplessness and ineffectiveness of both the white and Negro bourgeois democratic elements, and denoting the broad scope being defined for the proletarian revolution in this country.

III.

The Scottsboro case is also the slate upon which the Negro masses are practicing their political A B C. Before the case is over, the whole range of deception which can be produced by the representatives of those classes opposing the proletariat will have have been exhausted.

The main political significance of the earlier stage in the Scottsboro struggle rested in the fight between revolutionary forces led by the Communist Party and reformist forces represented by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The struggle went far beyond the question of who shall carry through the legal defense of the Scottsboro boys. It was a struggle between two opposing class forces. The reformist elements around the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People representing the line of capitulation to the American imperialists, aimed to stifle the mass movement, confining it within the limits of bourgeois legality. The revolutionary forces, under the leadership of the Communist Party, representing the line of relentless struggle against capitalism and national oppression, aimed to weld the unity of the white and Negro masses in a powerful mass movement for the defense of the Scottsboro boys as an integral part of the struggle against the entire system of National oppression. If the N. A. A. C. P. had been the victor in this early struggle—not only in the purely legal question of defense but on the more important point of ideological leadership over the Negro masses—the struggle would have been stifled and its revolutionary potentialities left undeveloped. With the Communist Party registering a decisive victory by establishing its hegemony over the Scottsboro movement, the proletariat had obtained a foothold for establishing its hegemony over the Negro liberation struggle itself. This early defeat of the N. A. A. C. P.—although it was far from destroying the influence of bourgeois reformist elements over the Negro people—removed at least partially one of the main obstacles in the development of the mass movement around Scottsboro. Without having accomplished this preliminary task, it would have been impossible to proceed with the mobilizing of a mass movement.

The fact that the N. A. A. C. P. was forced to practically rescind its statement attacking the Communists which it had issued

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on the day following the Decatur verdict, showed how completely the N A. A. C. P. had been defeated at least temporarily. It recoiled at the realization that to attack the Communists in the face of the seething mass movement would place a rope around its own neck. Its second statement, while containing an underhanded, hypocritical attack upon the Communists, was at the same time forced to announce "cooperation" in the collection of funds for the defense. This was a concrete expression, not only of the effects of the mass pressure, but of the ferment which is taking place within the ranks of the N.A.A.C.P. as shown in the participation of numerous branches in the united front and particularly by the St. Louis demonstration in which the local N. A. A. C. P. took part.

But this by no means signifies that the Communist Party is guaranteed the unchallenged leadership over the Scottsboro movement. That will depend upon how well we are able to broaden and deepen the movement, encompassing all the democratic masses set in motion by the future developments in the case, and guard against the exclusion of any of the popular democratic needs of these masses. It will also depend upon our ability to effectively disperse the democratic and other illusions common to such mass movements and inculcate it with an understanding of the direction it is traveling and the points at issue. We must sensitize the movement, make it receptive to the next steps raised by the logic of events and development.

The broad strata of the Negro masses who have been activized by the Scottsboro case, bring with them many petty-bourgeois illusions which are the soil in which the reformists implant their influence. That is why the first preliminary setback to the N.A.A. C.P. by no means signifies that nothing more is to be feared from that quarter. If it is not the N.A.A.C.P, there will be other organizations and individuals to take its place. History by no means guarantees in advance that the broad strata of the Negro population, holding varied and confused views, many dominated by ideas alien to the class-conscious proletariat, will simply fall into the organizations of the Communist movement. In the end they will join the broad stream of the proletarian revolution. But they will arrive via various by-paths and after having passed through varied experiences. They will set up their own organizations, of a non-class-conscious character, which might even be directly opposed to the organizations of the working class. Such, for instance, would be Negro bourgeois nationalist organizations which might crop up on the wave of the Scottsboro case or gain a new lease of life as a result of it. Others of an objectively national-revolutionary char-

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acter, but strongly dominated by petty-bourgeois ideology and "race consciousness," are even more likely to exert great influence. In any case, while appreciating the broad scope of the Scottsboro movement, we must at the same time realize that a long struggle still lies ahead if we are to establish the unchallenged leadership of the Communist Party in this movement. And when we use the word "struggle" we do not mean it in its narrow sense, but rather in the sense of great flexibility in being able to encompass the popular demands of the Negro masses within the general scope of our program and to channelize this popular movement into the general stream of the proletarian revolution.

It is precisely at this stage of the movement, however, where as a result of the Decatur verdict ever larger sections of the masses have been set into motion that the Negro reformists are desperately rallying their forces for a concerted drive to wrest the leadership of the movement from the revolutionary forces. The march to Washington is quickly crystallizing the points at issue between the various elements in the Scottsboro movement. The march will confront the Roosevelt administration squarely with the Negro question, which will serve to further compromise the governmental party whose main political strength is in the South and one of whose principal political tenets lies in the support of the lynch law system.

Realizing that the march is the highest expression yet attained of the mass movement, the forces of reaction are rapidly mobilizing to smash this march hoping to strike a heavy blow at the mass movement as a whole. A leading role in this is being played by the Democrats, particularly Tammany Hall, which is at the same time trying to "cash in" on the mass resentment among the Negroes for political gains.

The march is at the same time a testing ground for the various bourgeois and reformist elements who have professed willingness in one way or another to go along in the united front. Mr. Davis, of the *Amsterdam News*, is already frightened by the seriousness with which the masses took up the proposal for the march, is slyly attempting to deprive it of its mass character by suggesting to substitute for it a delegation of "representative citizens" to Washington to lay the petitions at the President's feet. The *Chicago Defender*, attempting in typical petty-bourgeois fashion to keep the movement within legal and "respectable" bounds, declared "that if the Scottsboro boys are to be saved it will be through the proper legal channels. . . . It [Chicago Defender] knows that the orderly process of courts is not influenced by petitions. It knows also that President Roosevelt has nothing to do with the courts, and that he will say as much when and if the peti-

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tion is presented to him. . . . That is why *The Chicago Defender* is taking no part in the great petition drive."

Taking their cue from Judge Horton and the Southern lynch press, the withdrawal of the I. L. D. from the case has now become one of the most important demands of the enemies of the masses. The Negro reformists, as well as the Southern white press, are attempting to shift the responsibility for the infamous verdict at Decatur to the I. L. D. and its tactics. The uniformity of their declarations are striking.

Thus *The Chattanooga News*, whose editor, George Milton, is a member of the Southern Interracial Commission and heads a committee which has just issued a "report" on lynching, states:

> "We call upon the International Labor Defense to withdraw from the case. It has overreached itself and exposed its callous indifference to the real issues. We believe that Alabama will provide adequate, fair counsel for the Negroes and that in a new atmosphere, the trial may proceed."

The type of counsel that Alabama (and Tennessee also) provides for Negroes was shown adequately enough at the first trial in Scottsboro where a local lawer together with the Chattanoogan Kluxer Roddy was appointed by the court to "defend" the boys. And it is well to recall that Mr. Milton, at that time, had called the trial "fair" and issued a statement in the name of the Chattanooga Interracial Commission denouncing the I. L. D.

"When the Communist organization, the International Labor Defense, barged into the case the doom of the lads was sealed," declared the Negro "socialist" George S. Schuyler, writing in the *Pittsburgh Courier* on April 22, 1933. He devotes his whole column to a vicious attack upon the I. L. D. and its tactics and calls for the support of the—N. A. A. C. P.

The Pittsburgh Courier, which is a semi-official organ of the N. A. A. C. P., declared editorially in its issue of April 22 (which seems to have been devoted almost entirely to an attack upon the I. L. D.) that "In our opinion, the case has reached the stage of exaggeration. There has been too much publicity; too much sectional recrimination; too much racial emphasis; and too much personal feeling." And in order to seem absolutely democratic, it goes on to demand the withdrawal of everybody (with the exception of Judge Horton) thus far connected with the case—Attorney-General Knight, the N. A. A. C. P., the I. L. D.—"We believe sincerely that the I.L.D., known as a wing of the Communist Party, should gracefully withdraw. . . ."

The ruling class—from Washington to Decatur—is alarmed at the sweep of the movement set loose by the Scottsboro Case,

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sensing its present and potential danger to white ruling class hegemony The Negro reformists—even of the "left," demagogic variety—are alarmed at the growing threat to their own influence within the Negro people based upon bourgeois Negro nationalism. They are fearful of the mass seething which is fast seeking the road of alliance with the white working class, which has been anathema to the ruling class and the Negro reformists alike.

As the Scottsboro struggle proceeds, sharpening the class antagonisms with each new action and each issue which crops up, the forces of reaction are attempting to mobilize every possible ally against the mass movement. In New York, Attorney Liebowitz who admits he is an organization Democrat, has become a center around whom all the reactionary forces, including the Negro reformists of all shades, are gathering in an attempt to utilize his popularity to wrest the legal defense from the I. L. D., to set up an "independent defense committee" with the exclusion of the Communist and revolutionary forces. Such a course of action is being very broadly "hinted at" by the Negro reformist newspapers, particularly by the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Meetings are being organized by these elements, in cooperation with Tammany Hall, with Liebowitz as the main center of "attraction." In this way they are attempting to smash the movement (at the time of writing particularly the march to Washington) and thus objectively clear the way for more "impartial" legal lynchings.

Attorney Liebowitz appeared as a representative of bourgeois democracy, giving voice in the courtroom at Decatur and after, to many illusions about capitalist justice and democracy. He was placed in a position, where, as the defense lawyer in a trial the general policies of which had been determined by the International Labor Defense, he had to strike out persistently both for the democratic rights of Negroes as expressed by the demand for Negroes on juries and against the "white superiority" autocracy as expressed in the establishment of the innocence of the Negro boys despite the word of a white woman. Both these tasks demanded of him were entirely within the bounds of bourgeois liberalism and the issues that have so far found full expression in the case itself have not gone beyond the sphere of political democratic demands. But in regard to these demands he gave voice to illusions still common among the masses—such as the "fairness" of Judge Horton, faith in the Supreme Court at Washington, etc. The petty-bourgeois Negro leaders therefore rightly considered him more akin to themselves than the Communists, and for the Negro masses influenced by petty-bourgeois ideology he was more representative of their habitual mode of thinking.

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The statement condemning all Southern whites as morons, which Liebowitz is alleged to have issued soon after the verdict was handed down in Decatur, objectively gave support alike to the "white superiority" front fostered by the Southern ruling class and the reactionary nationalism of Negro "race leaders." The Negro misleaders, from Booker T. Washington to DuBois and Garvey, have attempted to indoctrinate the Negro masses with the conception that the white workers and the "poor whites" are the worst and most dangerous enemies of the Negro. This is the pivotal point around which the Negro reformists today build their attack upon the Communist Party and the mass protest movement of the black and white masses.

It would of course be ridiculous for Communists to demand that all those entering upon a revolutionary movement first discard all their illusions. Such illusions can only be dispelled in the course of struggle. The overcoming of illusions among the masses is a process, rooted alike in the stability or unstability of the conditions which gave rise to them and in the ability of the revolutionary Party to take advantage of every opportunity to expose them. Events do not of themselves, in some mysterious abstract manner, teach the masses. These events must be underlined and brought home to the masses, by a Party driving persistently toward its goal. This is the role that the Party must play in the Scottsboro movement, at the same time raising the next logical issues inherent in the further development of the movement.

One of the illusions which has already been dispelled in the course of the Decatur phase of the Scottsboro case is the belief that it would only be necessary to present conclusive evidence that the nine Negro boys are innocent and have been framed up in order to obtain their freedom. The popular masses, both white and Negro, have learned otherwise and this is an important step towards extending the mass movement. The shattering of this illusion by the Decatur verdict, after the innocence of the boys had been conclusively established during the trial, contributed to the release of the spontaneous mass protest.

Liebowitz constitutes a danger to proletarian hegemony in the Scottsboro movement because of the opportunity he offers for the retrenchment of the Negro reformist organizations and the capitalist political parties among the Negro masses.

To the extent that we are able to swing the broad Negro masses into motion on issues which they recognize as their own, at the same time appearing as the inspirers and leaders of these actions and isolating our enemies on the basis of these actions and issues, will

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depend our success in defeating these alien influences in the struggle for Negro liberation.

IV.

In the further development of the Scottsboro struggle an important task is the winning of the *white workers* and swinging them into action on the specific issues as they are raised in the Scottsboro Case. The Negro masses are still to be convinced that the white workers, not singly but in decisive masses, can dissassociate themselves from the ruling ideology of "white superiority" to the extent of actually joining with the Negro masses in a fight for Negro rights. This is the kernel around which the Negro reformists have built their whole case against the Communists. The point is not that they are wrong by all the laws of social development. The point is that the Scottsboro case can be made to accelerate this inevitable change in the attitude and actions of the white workers, and to the degree that it does this, will the influence of the Negro reformists and bourgeois democrats be decisively undermined.

The rapidity and the completeness with which the Scottsboro case accomplishes this depends, of course, upon the further development of the movement, the depths of the issues which both the Negro and white workers recognize as their own and act upon. Should the Scottsboro case turn out to be the spark kindling the struggle of the Negro peasantry in the Black Belt, the "poor whites" will be just as vitally concerned with the issue of land and find it necessary to break loose from the ideology of "white superiority" which has chained them to the ruling class. This process will be easier and more rapid for the white workers, especially in the North, but also in the industrial sectors of the South. History has proven and events are proving today that, in any case, the Negroes are the decisive revolutionary force in the South.

The alienation of the white masses from the Negroes, the fostering of enmity between the two, has always been the prerequisite for maintaining the subjugation of the Negro people and, consequently, the very low standard of living of the white toilers in the South. It has been chiefly on the issue of maitaining a "solid white front" against the Negroes, together with certain recompenses granted the "poor whites" in the form of privileges, which are denied the Negroes, that the white ruling class has been able to maintain its domination over the white masses.

The revolutionary Reconstruction governments fell only after the former slaveowners had succeeded in splitting the whites from the Republican Party and attaching them to themselves on the issue of defeating "Negro domination." The farm revolts of the

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90's were appeased in the South by a whole series of legal discriminations against Negroes culminating in the new state constitutions of 1900-1901, which replaced those of the revolutionary Reconstruction days, and granted the white masses those democratic rights which were by the same act being legally denied the Negroes. Since then there has been no serious break in this "white superiority" front, notwithstanding the mass migration of over a million Negroes to the North between 1917 and 1924.

The Scottsboro struggle gathering its forces in the milieu of the deep world crisis, and acting in conjunction with events of a more economically basic character like the revolt of the Negro share-croppers in Tallapoosa County, Alabama, might well become the lever for a radical transformation in the attitude and actions of the white masses in the South.

Appreciating the broad scope of the Scottsboro movement, its popular mass character, we must develop it from one step to the next, drawing ever broader masses into motion, to the point where it becomes the rallying center of the struggle for Negro liberation.

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The World Political Background of the Engineers Trial

EVERY now and again the veil is torn away, and the mechanics and motives of contemporary history are shown with startling clearness. Such was the effect when the secret Anglo-French naval agreement was published by an indiscreet American journalist. Such was the effect of the Hirtenberg scandal, when the transit of munitions across Austria to Hungary was discovered. And such, on a more impressive scale, is the effect of the disclosures at the Moscow trial of the engineers. Our Bolshevik diagnosis of international politics enables us to sharpen the blurred outlines, to discard the stereotypes, to see through the diplomatic lies. But especially in the present period of impending wars and revolutions; of capitalism driven to desperate remedies, to the ever increasing use of force, where deceit has failed; of capitalism in the fourth year of its worst crisis plunging recklessly towards violence as it seems to offer an escape from the inescapable; in this period, the diplomatic web of subterfuge and fraud wears thin, and is from time to time completely shattered when some antagonism more than usually acute breaks through the surface.

Such a revealing episode was the trial of the seventeen engineers, six of them British subjects and employees in the Soviet Union of the Metropolitan-Vickers Company. The trial of these men, on charges of military espionage, bribery, acts of sabotage and interventionist plotting, from its very first stages began to act as a focal point for the political lines of force that run criss-cross throughout the world.

MacDonald's confession, Thornton's deposition, which he afterwards unsuccessfully tried to repudiate, the damaging admissions drawn from the other English defendants during cross-examination, the testimony of the Russian Engineers—particularly Gussev's—and the array of supporting facts unearthed by the O. G. P. U. give a very clear picture of the quickening movement towards intervention of the imperialist powers, and of the hand taken in the whole business by the British Foreign Office and Secret Service.

This trial immediately recalls the "Industrial Party" trial of

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November, 1930. Here too, English imperialism was involved, though the main protagonist was France, the French General Staff, and its notorious Second Bureau, which is the espionage section of the French military machine. France in 1930 was the spearhead of the interventionist movement against the Soviet Union. Poincare and Briand, one the leading reactionary, and the other the outstanding "European Liberal" hypocrite in French politics, were in close touch with the counter-revolutionary organization of the Whites and their capitalist backers, the Torgprom (Russian Financial, Commercial and Industrial Association) located in Paris. Briand, it should be remembered, was the originator of the "Pan-Europe" scheme, which, excluding the U. S. S. R., was to constitute an anti-Soviet united front. Poincare also preached a "crusade" against the "disease of Bolshevism" and the Soviet "bandits." Sir Henry Deterding, the oil magnate, head of the Royal-Dutch Shell, together with Urquhardt, of Lena Goldfields fame, and the most vicious instigator of anti-Soviet activity in England, played a leading part in organizing the interventionist forces. In this they were the representatives of their whole class. All that was needed to complete this unholy combination was the presence of the members of the international social democracy; and as the trial revealed, the Menshevik centers in Berlin and Paris formed an integral part of the anti-Soviet front.

These outside organizations were linked with counter-revolutionary groups inside the Soviet Union. The so-called "center of the Engineers" was set up as far back as 1925. By 1928 it had developed into an underground political party, the Industrial Party.

The military phase of the class struggle came to an end with the defeat of the White Guards and foreign imperialist forces by the Red Army; but the class war went on under new forms. Acts of sabotage, and interventionist intrigues, took the place of open physical warfare.

The significance of the present trial is seen clearly only when the Industrial Party trial of 1930 and the other evidence of sabotage, spying, and preparation for intervention are taken into account. In the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union, and of the whole world, must carry on an unremitting struggle against the remnants of the old Russian ruling class and those disaffected elements that still persist among the technical workers. The class enemy inside the Soviet Union, though defeated, is not yet completely liquidated, and receives powerful support from the capitalistic world.

The position of leadership in the capitalist program of intervention is at the moment held by the British and Japanese empires.

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France, which once held this proud position, has at present serious distractions in Europe. With new worries made for her and her Polish ally by the advent of fascism in Germany, she feels the precariousness of her European hegemony. Franco-Italian differences have come more to the surface with the Italian move towards Adriatic expansion. At the same time we find negotiations for a "Four power pact" set on foot by Mussolini, to the active annoyance of Poland and France. The opposition of these nations has now crystalised into a "Five power" agreement, between France, Poland and the Little Entente, aimed against the Mussolini plan, and setting its face against any revision of the Versailles Treaties. Precipitate disclosure of this agreement by Pilsudski was followed by a diplomatic denial, probably at the insistence of France, but which contained the admission that such an agreement had been "designed". Benes, in another indiscreet speech, for which he has not yet been houled over the coals by the French, told the Czechoslovak Parliament that "Our territory can be won only by war." He added pointedly that "Italy underestimates the power against which she sets herself. . . events are drawing Czechoslovakia and Poland closer together, and a pact of lasting friendship is being planned between them." Italy is finding allies of her own (among the States of the so-called Danubian group) to counter-balance France's Little Entente. Hungary, Bugaria, stand beside Italy, confronting the "allies" of France: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Jugo-Slavia.

It is, however, important to remember that, in the European armed camp today, there is a continuous re-shifting of forces. The lines are not set hard. As is said to be the custom with Chinese generals, there may be some rapid cross-over movements; and with the existing instability, a minor accident may serve to set off the fuse. This is no place to enter on an analysis of what Hitlerism means for Germany, but in the present European situation, the Nazi government adds immensely to this instability. German-Polish hostility is greatly increased. French policy vacillates with nervous indecision. Austria, now more than ever divided on the question of the "Anschluss" with Germany, is fishing in the muddy waters of Vatican diplomacy.

With such conditions obtaining in Europe, France, though remaining in the van of the anti-Soviet constellation, is being outstripped, as far as overt aggressiveness goes, by the British Empire. And this brings us to the consideration of the most important line of political opposition among the capitalist powers, namely, that between England and the United States. It is in this basic contradiction, particularly in its relation to the common hostility of these

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rival imperialisms to the Soviet Union, that the key to present world politics must be sought.

But before dealing with this point, we must briefly recall the history of 1932. This was the year of the invasion of Manchuria by the Japanese, followed by the attack on Shanghai, and by the display of ever more open hostility towards the Soviet Union. It was the year of the Anglo-French "gentleman's agreement" at Lausanne, principally on the question of the American debts—an entente directed against the United States. It was the year of the Ottawa Conference, and the break between England and the Soviet Union. Finally, it was the year of the disarmament farce at Geneva, a farce in which the unconvincing actors are still going through the motions of pacifism on the stage, while behind the scenes the volume of armaments and the size of armies continually increase.

How did this history progress in 1933? Events moved faster. In the East, Manchuria was converted into Manchukuo. Jehol was conquered. Japanese airplanes were bombing Chahar province in the north-east; and down to the Peiping-Tientsin line in the south. The annexation of Chahar will bring Japan to the Mongolian border; and, as Baron Tanaka wrote in his notorious memorandum which is the horn-book of Japanese imperial expansion, "Japan must push forward, when the moment comes, into Inner and Outer Mongolia, in order to extend the frontiers of her kingdom on the continent of Asia." Outer Mongolia is at present an Autonomous People's Republic, linked with the Soviet Union. Here we see the first of the arrows pointing toward Soviet territory.

England's role in the Eastern adventure of her Japanese ally has been to give diplomatic support at Geneva on the one hand, and frustrate the anti-Japanese manoeuvers of the United States upon the other. Time and again, American overtures for united action against the Japanese, even reinforced by hints as to the possibility of a "new deal" on debts, have been turned down by British diplomacy, intent on playing its own dangerous game as Japan's under-cover man outside the Orient.

In pursuing this policy, England is by no means being quixotic. She is, in the first place, one of the greatest anti-Soviet powers. England is, more than any other country, affected by the growing colonial movements for national independence and freedom from imperialist exploitation. The Soviet solution of the national question is a powerful lever in India, Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, Ireland, China, and elsewhere, against the yoke of British capitalism. In the Meerut Case in India, Communism and the Soviet Union were as much on trial as any of the thirty-two defendants. So to find England pressing for intervention, to find her at the side of Japan

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in the latter's struggle for imperialist expansion and agression against the Soviet Union, is what is to be expected.

But there is another excellent reason for English support of Japan in the Far East, and here we recur to the major theme which was indicated above—namely, England's life and death economic struggle with the United States. To help Japan close the open door in North China in the face of the United States is an act of self-interest on the part of Great Britain.

MacDonald's departure from the gold standard was one battle in this economic struggle, giving England a differential advantage in the export markets at the expense of inflationary wage-cutting for the workers. Roosevelt's recent devaluation of the dollar is a counter-attack, more nearly equalising the relative positions of the British and American national capitalisms, but leaving the working classes of both countries absolutely worse off. The Anglo-American battle is being fought with high explosives in the Chaco between Bolivia and Paraguay. It is being fought with economic weapons in Canada, where as a result of the Ottawa agreements, a large amount of Canadian trade formerly with the United States is being transferred to England. It is being fought with the weapons of diplomacy behind closed doors at the Disamament Conference, where the United States is seeking in vain to use its position as creditor nation in order to impose limitations upon the armaments and military strength of its European debtors.

Though MacDonald and Roosevelt can pose together smiling for the photographers, the antagonism between England and America was never so sharp as it is today. This clear cut opposition has been brought more into the open as a result of the Washington conversations. The prelude to these "friendly" talks was the abandonment of the gold standard by America while the English premier and M. Herriot were in mid-Atlantic. Anglo-American economic rivalry has come to a head in the Argentine at the same time. And as MacDonald leaves, Prime Minister Bennett of Canada arrives to express the hope that better tariff arrangements will be negotiated between the United States and Canada—but within the limits set by the Ottawa conference.

England, for the last century and a half, has lived in great measure on the exploitation of countless millions of colonial subjects; and its colonies are today the battlefields of struggle for national independence. Nevertheless, her imperial power is still great; even though some of her colonies are in revolt, and others are engaged in fiscal war with the mother country.

But, as was said above, she is not only engaged in economic conflict with the United States; she is also, as a result of her desperate

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economic position, and under the impulsion of the conditions in her colonial empire, becoming openly the head and front of the capitalist offensive against the Soviet Union.

To summarize what immediately precedes—we have the growing aggressiveness of Great Britain in the forefront of the capitalist interventionists; we have England also giving more open support to Japanese imperialism, and this despite the serious economic and imperial contradictions that exist between these two countries; we have a situation in the colonial countries of the world which becomes constantly more threatening; and finally, we have the titanic conflict between English and American finance capital as one of the leading themes in the symphony of discords of the contemporary political scene.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, we are in a position to understand with a greater degree of clarity the international implications of the trial of the wreckers and spies that has just ended in Moscow, and also the dominant role played by England. Before and during the trial, England used every economic weapon in her arsenal to intimidate the Soviet Union from starting, and then from continuing, the trial; holding over the head of the Sovet Union the threat of an embargo, which was made effective immediately after the announcement of the verdicts. These facts take on a deeper significance in the light of the total complex of political forces that we see at work.

Our analysis shows us that the capitalist world, racked with internal conflict and international antagonisms, is being driven by a crisis of unparalleled severity on the road to war. The question of war is today central to the political situation. In the long run, war waged by capitalism, will be war against Socialism, and its living embodiment, the U. S. S. R. Immediately, we also see in the camp of the capitalists themselves every indication of approaching war.

These facts place in the very foreground of the international stage the question of intervention against the Soviet Union.

And here we have the explanation and real significance of the activities of the spies and wreckers of British imperialism in the Soviet Union. Only against the background of the international situation can we correctly estimate the warning signals given by the trial.

This international background can be summed up in the sentence —that the forces of monopoly capitalism and imperialism, caught up in the, to them, most inexplicable contradictions; terrified at the rapid growth of Socialist construction in the U. S. S. R., and at the rising revolutionary temper of the workers throughout the world;

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and with rapidly waning confidence as to their ability to extricate themselves from the crisis by any of the old expedients such as rationalization, wage-cutting, foreign dumping, limitation of production, physical destruction of stocks of commodities, or any other kind of capitalistic "planning"; are deliberately moving in the direction of war, in the desperate hope that through organized violence they may find a way out of the crisis. War on a large scale, of the capitalist nations among themselves, is inevitable; though it must be always born in mind that the highest form of the capitalist "way out" through blood-letting is an interventionary attack on the workers' fatherland, the Soviet Union.

The rise of Soviet economy contrasts with the decline in production and employment in the capitalistic world. The solution of the national problem in the Soviet Union contrasts with the rise of the revolutionary wave in imperialist and colonial countries. To quote from the theses of the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.: "The end of the relative stabilization of capitalism has set in . . . At the present moment, what is taking place is precisely the transition to a new phase of great collisions between classes and States, to a new cycle of revolutions and wars."

The hope of the imperialist powers is that they will, by beating down the Soviet power of the workers and degrading the Soviet Union into a field for colonial exploitation, be able to find for a time at least, relief from their present difficulties. They are being driven also to a war among themselves with the view of eliminating some of the rival robbers and dividing the spoils among the rest.

As to the first point—the Soviet Union is a much harder nut for the capitalist world to crack now, after the triumphant completion of the first Five-Year Plan, than was the case even in 1927; and very much harder than in the period of the early interventions. Now, with the successful inauguration of the second Five Year Plan, and especially with the conquering tempo of collective agriculture in the Socialist fields, as evidenced by the early figures for the spring sowing, the difficulties of a successful attack on the Soviet Union become greater. But this also means that the urgency of intervention becomes more intense. And, as the trial has shown, the preparations are being feverishly pressed.

As to the second point, war involves arming the population. War against the Soviet Union means that a large section of the proletariat in capitalist countries will overtly and actively oppose their governments. Nevertheless, it is towards both of these eventualities that the bourgeois governments of the world are being driven. As capitalists, they can do no other, but must seek a bloody, and even to themselves dangerous, way out of the crisis. Always this

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will be at the expense of the working class, until the workers take their own way out—the way of October.

As to the trial and the internal reaction of the U. S. S. R., we have the following facts to consider. First, that the sentences were lenient, in view of the strength of Soviet economy and the little harm that was effected owing to the vigilance of the working class. "The strength of the victorious Socialism of our country was such as to be a real factor in the sentence given by the Supreme Court", wrote *Pravda* in an editorial on the trial. Second, that the British threats were disregarded and the 80 per cent embargo on Soviet imports promptly answered with a complete economic boycott of Great Britain. As an *Izvestia* article pointed out, the days of "Curzon ultimatums" are past.

The might of the Socialist industry and agriculture gives the lie to the English Diehard press fabrications that the trial was a "frame-up", staged by the Communist Party to provide themselves with an alibi for the economic "collapse" brought on by their misguided industrial policies. The evidence at the trial itself broke away the ground from under the "frame-up" theory. Production statistics sufficiently confute the other lie.

Yet this clumsy slander, which many of the bourgeois English newspapers were apologetic about repeating, finds a home with the followers of Trotsky, and is made use of to further their campaign against the Soviet Union. The Joint Council of the English Labor Party and Trades Union Congress petitions for the release of the spies Thornton and MacDonald. But a deeper economic analysis of the trial remains as the work of the American Socialists and the American "Left Opposition." The comments of the American Socialist Party as recorded in the *New Leader* of April 22, are worth reproducing. This official publication writes: "One aspect of the trial is recalled. When Russian industry and agriculture have faced important crises in recent years a trial has been staged with accused persons facing charges of sabotage." This repetition of a well-circulated capitalist "fairy tale" is re-echoed by the Trotkyists, though with the characteristic twist that one has been led to expect from renegade elements. *The Militant* of April 15 writes: "The trial that is taking place in Moscow at present . . . throws light upon the feverish attempts of the foreign imperialists to hasten the collapse of Soviet economy, brought to a critical state by Stalinist mismanagement." Thus *The Militant*, making a preliminary feint at the "foreign imperialists" goes on to say that they are only "hastening" the economic "collapse of the Soviet Union, which according to Trotsky is directly attributable to the policies of the Communist Party. The shadow-boxing is with the imperialists;

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the real fight is against the international leadership of the working class.

The petition of the English Socialists, the comments of the *New Leader* expressing the views of the American Socialist Party, and the use of the trial for the purpose of anti-Soviet propoganda by the Trotskyists, shows these political groups in the attitudes that come naturally to them. These people are in one camp with the reactionaries. The differences between them are differences in degrees of viciousness. The open enemies of the working class present a straightforward problem. The slanders in the press of the avowed reactionaries expose themselves as much through their origin as through their intrinsic falseness and absurdity. The Socialist parties, though one of the conditions of their existence is the deception of the working class, are being forced by the pressure of events into less and less equivocal positions. Their betrayals and capitulations are repeated with growing rapidity and become ever more glaring in the present days of sharp conflict, in which sides must be taken with great definiteness and held to with extreme steadfastness. But the worst slanders, semi-concealed under the most dangerously deceptive formulations, pretending to a Leninist form, but masking a counter-revolutionary content, we have to look to the Trotskyists.

This trial has brought out the strength of the Socialist economic structure built up by the workers and their vanguard the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. It has shown again the need for unceasing vigilance on the part of the proletariat of the whole world to ward off the blows of capitalist aggression and intervention from their common Fatherland.

This trial once more enforces the lession that only the Communist Party, with its unitary structure, discipline, and monolithic quality, can lead the working class victoriously to the revolution of its emancipation, can guard that revolution with the strong arm of proletarian dictatorship, and finally bring the working masses through the transition period to the threshhold of the classless society of the future.

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Communism and the Jewish Question in Germany

The following article is an extract from a monograph on "Communism and the Jewish Problem" by a co-worker of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE JEWISH PROBLEM

THE Jewish problem cannot be understood unless we analyze the origin of the special social and economic role of the Jews in the development of our commodity-producing society. Because of the natural conditions of production in the area where they developed from a group of tribes into a nation (Stalin defined a "nation" as the "historically developed, permanent community of language, territory, economic life, psychic unity, etc."), and because of their social conditions of production, the Jews were compelled to pursue the course of a people whose dominant social strata followed trade as an occupation. Although there were Jewish peasants at that time, the elements that determined the Jews' subsequent evolution were the traders.

This fact fixed the social and national fate of the Jews. During the course of the wars over their territory, lying as it did at the intersection of trade routes as well as necessarily at the point of contact between the political spheres of the empires of the Nile to the south and the Mesopotamian valley to the north, they were led into captivity (exile) by one of their conquerors. This was in accordance with the custom of ancient society—that is of slave labor. The more prosperous classes, especially those linked with the circulation of commodities, were carried off into captivity, while the poor peasant population remained in Palestine.

This historical event led to the dissolution of the Jewish nation and their subsequent transformation into a caste. The dispersion of the Jews really began with the Exile. As the agents of commodity circulation they became an important factor in the extension of the conquerors' rule.

AGENTS OF COMMODITY CIRCULATION

As the agents of commodity circulation the Jews fulfilled a historically conditioned, necessary social and economic function. They remained bound up with this function chiefly because of their particular monotheistic religion, which grew out of their social evolution and which was in turn a prominent factor in the preservation

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of the Jews as an isolated element both in their function and their environment. At the time when those Jews who had remained in their original area, were destroyed as a nation by the Roman Empire, the majority of the Jewish people was already scattered over the known world in their particular social form. This people could not be destroyed nationally, as it offered no focus of national resistance to the Roman Empire. Nor could it disappear socially, neither by annihilation nor by assimilation, as its social existence was based upon the economic need for its function, while the function persisted in caste form as a result of their religion.

From this time on, the concept of the Jews is bound up with a particular idea, arising from their function in the evolution of the circulation of money and commodities. This origin of the Jews not only explains the special role of the Jews in subsequent social evolution; it also contains the key to the social conflicts with the Jews that occur in cycles, impressive and bloody examples of which are found in German history.

The Jews exercised a practical monopoly of their function in ancient economy, based as it was upon slave production. And in the period of natural economy that followed ancient society and preceded feudalism, the Jews were the conservators of the most primitive forms of trade. In its growth feudalism needed the Jews not only as an urban element; as the agent of trade and of money he was an important factor in the original accumulation of capital based upon usury and trade. But the conflict between society and the Jew, and Jewish persecution, begins as soon as the process of original accumulation reaches a certain stage of maturity.

There were three cycles of persecution in the feudal age. The first occurred during the period of social, and hence religious, tension in the Crusades; the second during the phase of evolution of a closed urban economy; and the third in the period of peasant wars. Persecution of the Jews was always a symptom of serious social disturbance throughout a society. The external manifestation of these tensions took on a religious form, while their social core led to a shift in the social role of the Jews. In their caste isolation they were excluded from the religious artisan guilds, and as the conflicts grew they were also forbidden to acquire land. Thus, at the close of the age of feudalism, which is marked by the beginning of the peasant revolts, they lost their original role in the towns and became minor money, grain and cattle usurers in the rural districts. This economic function of theirs became the object of bitter hatred as soon as it was recognized as an obstacle to the social continuation of the feudal system.

The peasant who was a victim of that system, also turned against

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the Jews in his efforts to destroy it. But whatever role the Jewish caste played in the course of time, it was always the upper class, which anxiously tried to maintain its domination in the ghetto even by religious means and which profited by the caste's function. It was the proletarian or semi-proletarian Jewish masses that were the chief victims of the conflicts with the non-Jewish world.

In turn, these conflicts at the close of the feudal period are the basis for social and national demarcation among the Jews themselves. In a stunted form, usually clothed in a religious mask, we find severe, and often bloody, class struggles within the Jewish communities at the close of the Middle Ages; and in the Twentieth Century these class struggles grow tremendously owing to the evolution of a Jewish industrial proletariat in Eastern Europe.

The feudal structure of Eastern Europe resulted in the Jews that fled there retaining major vestiges of their nationality because of their extremely strong caste isolation; the Jews that remained in Western Europe (Germany, etc.) or returned to the West joined with the rest of society in entering upon the period of evolution of modern bourgeois, capitalist society.

THE JEWISH PROBLEM IN BOURGEOIS SOCIETY

The Jewish caste was at the very center of the rise of the German bourgeoisie. The end of the feudal period marks the return of the Jews to their function as agents of mercantile capital. The rise of modern capitalism finds them in the forefront of embryonic finance capital. Socially, the Jews were the first bourgeoisie. The liberation of the bourgeoisie from the shackles of feudal society, and the growth of society "which uninterruptedly produces the Jews itself" (Marx), and which makes the function of the Jews a function of society as a whole, has no place for the ghetto, as the latter is no longer required. The caste is absorbed in the class; the emancipation of the bourgeoisie leads to the emancipation and assimilation of the German (Western) Jews. The late date of bourgeois emancipation in Germany, compared with France and England, explains the later emancipation of the Jews, their delayed assimilation, and the persistence of anti-Semitic ideology.

This process draws the Jews into the sphere of modern class struggles. The specialized social role of the Jews in the past caused them to have practically no representation among the industrial workers, the peasantry, the military and the civil service. Their class differentiation occured together with the disintegration and proletarization of the middle classes and petty bourgeoisie, the small shopkeepers, independent artisans, and the white collar class. But as the former function of the Jews has become the inclusive function of all society, the non-Jewish victims of capitalist, commodity-

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producing society (with the exception of proletarians who know the conditions of bourgeois class society) think that the Jews are to blame for their own injustices, since traditional concepts persist (existence changes faster than consciousness).

This illusion is aided by the fact that the Jews play a greater part in mercantile, bank and industrial capital than is socially "normal." The exclusion of the Jew from primary production, the fact that he is neither a peasant nor a worker, that he follows occupations which most resemble his former function and which he is constrained to enter because numerous occupations are closed to him even in bourgeois society owing to the persistence of old attitudes and the newer effect of the idea of Jewish competition—all this is suffiicient reason for petty bourgeois elements to make the Jew an object of their erroneous class hatred.

THE SIN AGAINST THE CLASS

The ideological forms of anti-Semitism change with the ideology of society. Modern bourgeois society cannot operate with religious forms of thought alone. Scientific concepts take the place of religious ones. What used to be the sin against the Gospels is today the "sin against the blood." The profound social character of the roots of anti-Jewish hatred as well as the danger that the classes disintegrated by the crisis of capitalist society may realize the true causes of their decline and link their fortunes with those of the working class, compels the ruling class to shift the cause of this misery far beyond all social spheres. The nebulous regions of race theory, of blood and skull shape, are admirably suited to the purpose. The conscious aim is to use the role of race hatred in the period of imperialism not merely to combat the class enemy at home, but to achieve an ideological reinforcement of external imperialist tendencies. The belief that the Jew is to blame is designed to strengthen the other conviction—that "Deutschland ueber Alles" is predestined to rule the world. From this point of view race demagogy is to mobilize middle-class youth for fascism and against the militant proletariat.

Communists recognize Jewish capital only as a part of all capital, which without distinction of origin or nationality exploits all workers and victimizes all toilers, both Gentile and Jew.

> "The exploitation of man by man is not a specific Jewish occupation, but one characteristic of bourgeois society, which will end only with the downfall of bourgeois society." (Bebel)
>
> "It is not the Jews that are the enemies of the toilers; the workers' enemies are the capitalists of all countries. There are workers and toilers among the Jews; they are the majority, they are our brothers, our comrades in the battle for Socialism, because they are oppressed by capitalism." (Lenin)

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The Confessions of an American "Marxist"

By M. CHILDS and H. YARIS

THE bourgeoisie has been carrying on a war against Marxism ever since its inception. Repeatedly Marxism has been "annihilated," yet despite this it has continued to grow and take hold of larger and larger sections of the working masses.

Any professor in order to earn his academic spurs had only to write a learned book "refuting" the theories of Marx. Countless volumes were written, each one delivering the final blow, but like blank shells the resound was furious, but ineffective. Marxism was able to withstand these attacks and has conquered one-sixth of the globe for the proletariat. Marxism has become the theory of the proletariat in every corner of the globe.

We are living now in the period of the end of relative capitalist stabilization, in a transition period to sharp clashes between classes and states, a new round of wars and revolutions. With the deepening of the crisis, the proletariat begins to seek a revolutionary way out of capitalist chaos. The bourgeoisie in its attempts to save the capitalist system and to stem the tide of revolution intensifies its attack against the theory of the revolutionary proletariat, Marxism-Leninism.

We can see this at the present time in Germany, where Hitler and fascism, even if it has no solution for the capitalist crisis, rallies the counter-revolutionary bands for a crusade to "exterminate Marxism."

In its fight against the proletariat and its theories the bourgeoisie does not stand alone, but has at its service social-fascism. These lackeys of capitalism have long ago falsified and revised the teachings of Marx. Bernstein and Kautsky were in the lead in trying to take the revolutionary essence out of Marxism. The American opportunists followed in the same direction. We have our Hillquits, Spargos, Boudins, S. L. P., as well as the Lovestonite and Cannonite renegades.

Only recently Ernest Untermann, the American translator of Karl Marx' *Capital*, in a series of articles published in the Socialist *Milwaukee Leader* of February 17 and 18, entitled: "Confessions of an American Marxist," sets out to prove that Marxism is no longer valid.

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To refute all the slanders and distortions of Untermann would require many pages and a great deal of time. It means replowing ground which Marx, Engels, and Lenin have long ago gone over. In their writings they have answered the Untermanns, who in their time carried the names of Proudhon, Bakunin, Duehring, Vogt, Bernstein, Tugan-Baranovsky, and Kautsky. One might say that it would be more profitable to utilize the time spent in answering falsehoods which have been shattered long ago, for the practical struggle against capitalism. Nevertheless, it is necessary to answer Mr. Untermann, even if only in a limited sense, keeping in mind that the struggle against the falsifiers of Marxism like Untermann is also an important part of the practical struggle against capitalism.

In attacking Marxism, Untermann sets out to annihilate all of its component parts. He writes:

> "So it is not only the Marxian theory of value and surplus value, but the whole Marxian theory of the effect of capitalist development on the different social classes and their consciousness which has been outmoded by the economic progress in the United States." *

* Unless otherwise stated all of Untermann's statements are from his articles "Confessions of an American Marxian."

Whenever the ideologists of the bourgeoisie attack Marxism they have a stock argument, that it has become old. Mr. Untermann partakes of the same phraseology. He writes:

> "And the Marxians instead of leading are still insisting upon the old theories which grew out of the Manchestrian stage of capitalism."

This is a characteristic argument of international social-fascism. Marx, they claim, was all right sixty or eighty years ago, but today his theories are no longer valid. The Austrian social-democratic theoretician, Naftali, claims that at the time Marx wrote his *Capital* we had a different capitalism. Now, writes Mr. Naftali, we are living in the period of "later capitalism." He even calls this the period of "early Socialism." He is not referring to the U.S.S.R. but to the "Socialism" of capitalist Germany and Austria.

Karl Renner, the leader of Austrian social-fascism, in his book *The Road to Realization* (1929), writes:

> "The description of Marx in *Capital*, concerning the development of the capitalist and following him the workers is today absolutely not typical."

receives surplus value through the enslavement of the working class; for, according to Renner, Marx' analysis of class relationships was

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too "one-sided." Marx did not see one of the chief characteristics of capitalism, that is "economic democracy" which grows into Socialism.

As late as 1931 the head of the German trade unions, Tarnow, placed the following thesis before the Social-Democratic Party Conference at Leipzig:

> "The growth of capitalism must be divided into two periods—the period of English imperialism, which was the period of limited expansion, and the period of American imperialism, which on the basis of a new technique can develop and spread without end. Marx and LaSalle were characteristic of the first period. The second period is typified by Ford, which proves that capitalism can develop and grow, while the workers must not necessarily have remained in poverty."

Here we see the social democracy discarding Marx for Ford; Tarnow further stated:

> "Henry Ford's book, *My Life and Achievements* is beyond doubt the most revolutionary collection of economic literature in existence up to now."

Ernest Untermann is therefore not alone; Tarnow has his Ford, while Technocracy becomes the gospel for Untermann. The crisis however has smashed and exposed the theories of Ford and Tarnow, but the developments of capitalism have vindicated the predictions of Karl Marx.

Have the chief characteristics of capitalism changed since the time of Marx? Bucharin in May, 1917, once argued for changing that part of the Party program which contained the analysis of the fundamental features of capitalism, and wished to substitute for this a new analysis, that of imperialism. Lenin strongly opposed this, and pointed out that:

> "Fundamentally these features (of capitalism—M. C. and H. Y.) have *not* been changed by imperialism, the era of finance capital. Imperialism is a continuation of the development of capitalism." (Lenin, Vol. XX, Book 1, page 331, International Publishers.)

Although capitalism does not stand still, in the process of development it acquires certain new features which arise on the basis of the general laws of capitalist development. But monopoly capitalism, instead of eliminating the contradictions, further sharpens them and raises them to a higher level. Lenin emphasized that imperialism neither does nor can transform capitalism from top to bottom. If Mr. Untermann thinks that capitalism has changed its nature, that it is not the capitalism that Marx spoke of, he is badly mistaken.

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The theories of Marx about capitalism, which were further developed by Lenin, still remain in full force.

The philosophy of social-fascism as represented by E. Untermann, is that of the decaying imperialist bourgeoisie. Untermann, basing himself upon the Technocrats, eliminates the working class as a force. He writes in his confessions:

> "Machines are invented and directed by technical experts. So far as the human mind has something to do with this, it is the mind of the technician that does the driving, not that of the exploited, displaced, class-conscious or revolutionary wage worker."

This is only a parrot-like repetition of Oswald Spengler, who in his book *Man and Technique*, writes:

> "The imbecile phrase, 'the wheels would all be standing still, did thy mighty arms so will' beclouds the minds of the chatterers and scribblers. That, even a sheep could bring about, if it were to fall into the machinery. But to invent these wheels and set them working so as to provide that 'strong arm' with its living, that is something which only a few *born* thereto can achieve." (Page 92)

Spengler speaks this way because he sees the decay of imperialism, and that the working class will become that force which will overthrow capitalism and establish its own power. He fears this power. That is why he writes:

> "There is beginning in numberless forms from sabotage by way of strike, to suicide—*the mutiny of the hands against their destiny*, against the machine, against the organized life, against anything and everything."

And further:

> "This mutiny, world-wide, threatens to put an end to the possibility of technical economic work." (Pages 98-99)

How the bourgeoisie fears this "mutiny," the uprising of the enslaved! Did not the old and senile Kautsky stamp his feet in rage and shout that the proletarian revolution, which was not in line with his textbooks, is interfering with the "orderly" process of technical development? The American disciples of Kautsky also fear this mutiny. That is why Technocracy with its pipe dream of eliminating the revolutionary factor of society, the proletariat, is acceptable to Mr. Untermann and his brothers of the Socialist Party.

Untermann waves aside the importance of the proletariat, and as a true petty-bourgeois places instead, "an extension of middle class influence." He wishes to prove that Marx is all wrong in giving the leading role to the working class.

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> "Marx and his uncritical followers always thought that the minds of the wage workers would become class-conscious under the lash of the capitalist development." In Marx' picture, "the mind of the wage slave acquired with its class-conciousness also intelligence to organize his class into one compact revolutionary Party and to usher in Socialism. The maturity of capitalism also implied the maturity of the working class mind to grasp and carry through its historical mission."

"Things have not turned out that way in this country," says Mr. Untermann.

First of all, is it possible for the middle class to take leadership in the establishment of a new order? This is impossible, because the middle class finds itself in such an economic situation that it must continually vaccilate between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its past draws the middle class towards the bourgeoisie, its future towards the proletariat. In order for it to carry on a decisive struggle against capitalism it must follow the only consistent revolutionary class, the proletariat.

The American proletariat lagged behind in developing class consciousness. This was due to certain economic and historical peculiarities in American development which left their mark upon class relationships and class consciousness. Marx and Engels very often referred to this in their correspondence on America. But they also pointed out, however, that once the American proletariat awakens, the class struggle would develop with the rapidity that is typical of America's general development. Contrary to Mr. Untermann, the American proletariat has shown in the last decade of class struggles that it has developed class consciousness and organized a compact revolutionary working class Party—the Communist Party. The proletariat by its very nature and position in society is destined to lead the revolution against capitalism and for the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship, under the leadership of the Communist Party.

When Mr. Untermann asserts that the farmer is more class-conscious (!) he becomes involved in a maze of contradictions in order to build up a justification for the role he attributes to the middle class.

In order to prove Marx wrong and outdated, he states that:

> "A small minority of capitalists has concentrated and centralized industrial control far beyond the boldest dream of Marx."

But in the next paragraph Mr. Untermann says:

> "Incidentaly the American middle classes have not disappeared or become of minor importance. They have increased compared to the wage workers."

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If there has been this development of concentration and centralization even "beyond the boldest dream of Marx," upon what economic basis did the middle class increase? Concentration and centralization of capital can take place only through the attraction of more capital by capital and the expropriation of weaker capitalists and the middle classes. This is especially clear in the present crisis, with its mass bankruptcies, inflation, and expropriation of the middle class and farmers by monopoly capitalism.

Untermann discovers another argument against Marx. He asks why "the so-called (!) proletarian revolution did not arrive first in the country of the biggest and best capitalism, but in economically backward Russia?" Untermann contends that the revolution in Russia had nothing to do with the maturity of the working class. According to the "Marxian" Untermann, the German general-staff is responsible for the revolution in Russia. They sent Lenin to "scold" the masses into the revolution. In fact, he says, "nine-tenths of the Russian people were and are farmers." Repeating the Trotskyite slander, he says: "even the leaders of the Bolsheviki in Russia did not think of such a revolution."

A good deal of this nonsense taken from the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Liberty*, need not be answered. But what is Untermann driving at? To show that Marx was all wrong on the question of the proletarian revolution. If Marx was right, then why did not proletarian revolution occur first in the United States, "the highest and best capitalism in this globe." Menshevism speaks an international language. Mr. Untermann repeats the words of the old Menshevist Sukhanov. Sukhanov in his *Memoirs* put the problem of the proletarian revolution as does Mr. Untermann. He claimed that Russia was not ripe objectively for the revolution, that Russia did not possess the economic prerequisites for Socialism. Sukhanov talked of a necessary "standard of culture" which must exist before a revolution can take place.

Lenin answered these false arguments of the Mensheviks very effectively. He showed how these people did not see anything new in the period since the world war. That is why Lenin showed that the working class could do nothing else in the revolutionary situation which existed in Russia at that time, but to go forward and take power. As to the "standard of culture" that Sukhanov demanded as a guarantee for revolution, Lenin replied that this is only an empty phrase of an opportunist—no such standard exists.

> "Why can't we begin by establishing in a revolutionary manner the conditions for this standard and proceed on the basis of workers' and peasants' power to catch up?" (Lenin, Vol. XVIII, "About Our Revolution," Russian Edition.)

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Daniel De Leon also had the idea that the proletarian revolution must first come to the United States, because it is the most developed country economically. Untermann, just like Sukhanov, fails to understand the law of the unequal development of capitalism which makes possible leaping, jerking development, the outstripping of some imperialist countries by others, the squeezing out of one or another, periodic redistribution of the world by means of imperialist war, etc. It is this uneveness of development in the period of imperialism which can cause the breaking out of revolution in the weakest link in the chain of world imperialism. Russia was that weakest link in 1917.

In arguing against Rykov in 1917 Lenin stated as follows:

> "Comrade Rykov says that Socialism must first come from other countries with greater industrial development. But this is not so. It is hard to tell who will begin and will end. This is not Marxism, but a parody on Marxism. Marx said that France would begin and that Germany would finish. But it turned out that the Russian proletariat achieved more than anybody else." (Lenin, Vol. XX, Book 1, page 287.)

Untermann's conception of the laws of revolution is nothing but vulgar ecenomic determinism. It is not historical materialism. Engels warned against those who distort historical materialism as meaning "that the economic factor is the *only* one." In a letter to Starkenburg (1894) Engels wrote: "consequently there is no such thing as the automatic action of economics as it is very conveniently expressed sometimes." Engels pointed out that other factors often enter into the situation which act and react upon each other as well as upon the economic relations which form a continuous thread, the only one which leads to understanding.

In his attacks against Marxism what are Mr. Untermann and social-fascism driving at? It is clear that when he says that he does not want a transition to Socialism in "Moscow style" he means that he does not want a proletarian revolution, that the task of social-fascism as the last mainstay of capitalism is to save this system of exploitation. Therefore, Untermann predicts the future in the real cowardly fashion of the social-fascists. He says:

> *"What is really on the cards is that the American Socialists will have to go with this muddled mass of unwilling rebels of all classes no matter how far they stray from the classic Marxian path. We shall have to share their fate. The more willingly we do it the better for us. We shall not get a scientifically planned transition to Socialism after the Marxian forecast, even less a proletarian revolution after the Moscow style."* (Our emphasis—M. C. and H. Y.)

Untermann tells the proletariat to be meek and docile, that it

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should not step forward as the leader of all the oppressed, but should submerge its class interests with that of the "muddled mass," which of course means to capitulate before capitalism. He tells the American Socialist Party not to depend upon the proletariat, that the middle class is more important, "in fact their (middle class—M. C. and H. Y.) vote counts far more than that of organized labor." Social-fascism, a party of parliamentary cretinism, measures everything by the number of votes. As for vote catching, Untermann claims Marxism is not very profitable.

The Fiftieth Anniversary of the death of Karl Marx takes place in the midst of the sharpest crisis of capitalism which verifies the scientific predictions of the great genuis and working class leader, Karl Marx. Not even the bourgeoisie dares to predict what will be tomorrow. But the revolutionary proletariat can very confidently say that capitalism is doomed, and the yelpings of a Mr. Untermann will not save it from its fate at the hands of the proletariat.

Capitalism is decaying, capitalism is dying. Marxism-Leninism lives and grows stronger. We can say along with Marx that we are living in a period when "each day has in it concentrated the essence of twenty years."

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The Tasks of the C. P. of Mexico in the Conditions of the End of Capitalist Stabilization

By GONZALEZ (*Mexico*)

THE recent Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Mexico is characterized, first, by the frank analysis and the unprecedented sharp criticism of the lagging behind (the resolution states "retrocession") of the Communist Party and of the revolutionary movement in general; and second, by the efforts made to apply the conclusions and the decisions of the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. to the concrete situation of the country.

First of all, the Plenum established the fact that it is true that the development of the revolutionary crisis in South America and the Carribean regions, is impeded by the "low degree of organization of the proletariat and the immaturity of the Communist Parties," and that this does not mean that these countries remain outside of the international situation which the Twelfth Plenum characterized as the "end of relative capitalist stabilization" and "a period of transition to a new round of wars and revolutions."

The end of the relative capitalist stabilization is expressed in this country by: a) an extraordinary aggravation of the economic crisis; b) a certain development of the mass revolutionary upsurge; and c) a tremendous sharpening of the rivalry between English and Yankee imperialisms.

The figures published in the article of Comrade Sinani regarding the crisis in South America and the Carribean (*Communist International*, Nos. 3 and 4, Spanish edition), show the relation that exists between the capitalist and imperialist world and the semi-colonial countries of South America and the Carribean, and how the world crisis of capitalism is reflected in the latter. The main figures regarding the development of the economic crisis in Mexico, are those dealing with export and with the mining and oil industries.

The report of the Political Bureau to the Plenum summarizes this data as follows:

Between 1929 and 1932, the exports of Mexico were reduced from 590 millions of pesos to 304 millions—a decrease of 48%. Petroleum production, already extraordinarily lowered since 1921,

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was reduced between 1929 and 1932 from 44 million barrels to 32 million, that is 27.7%. The most important data dealing with the mining industry are those regarding silver production, since Mexico is the main silver producing country. The average monthly production of silver in 1929 was 9,058,000 troy ounces; in 1932, 5,918,000 troy ounces; a reduction of approximately 34%, and during this period of time the price per troy ounce was reduced from 65 cents in 1929 to 24½ cents in December, 1932—a drop of 62.6%.

It is upon this foundation that the situation of Mexico develops in the period of the end of relative capitalist stabilization. The fundamental causes of the sharpening of the economic crisis in the country remain the following: low prices of raw materials on the world market and high custom tariffs of the United States. To this there is added the growing contraction of the internal market as the result of growing misery. The Plenum of the Central Committee has given the material necessary to combat and destroy the legend of "the exceptional conditions of Mexico," of "the early return of prosperity," etc., which is constantly propagated by the government, by the National Revolutionary Party, the mercenary press and the reformist government leaders.

The development of the mass revolutionary upsurge has been manifested in a whole series of strikes, unemployed movements, peasant and Indian uprisings, etc., in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Cuba, Mexico, and Central America: in the insurrection of the Navy and the formation of Soviets in certain regions of Chile; in the uprising of Salvador.

The rivalry between Great Britain and the United States for the economic and political control of these countries has already led to a war between Paraguay and Bolivia and between Peru and Columbia which will probably grow into a war between two groups of countries. The Mexican government is preparing itself with all haste to take part in this war. (The reorganization of the Army and Navy, the strengthening of the Air Force, the contract with Spain for the construction of fifteen war ships, the proposals for obligatory military training, organization of Army reserves, the construction of strategic highways, etc.)

The struggle of the bourgeois landlord factions which has not stopped and which in November led to the military occupation of the State of Vera Cruz and attack of the federal government against Tejeda (its Governor), will be sharpened as the economic crisis develops and the pressure of Anglo-American rivalry grows. The sharpening of the factional struggle is linked up with the

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presidential election campaign of 1934 which has already begun and is also linked up with the role of Mexico in the South American wars. British imperialism seeks and will not fail to find its instruments within those groups who are opposed to the Rodriguez-Calles government (Tejeda, for example). Recently a commission of oil experts of the Royal Dutch Shell, three English warships and the military attaché of Great Britain in Washington had visited the country. There had also been added a military attaché to the British Legation in Mexico.

All of this coincides with the announcement of the visit of two Japanese warships to the Pacific ports and with the declarations of the Mexican government against the policy of Japan in China, seconding in this servile manner the position of the United States. Each day the importance of Mexico in the war plans of Yankee imperialism becomes clearer, not only from the point of view of the South-American war, but also from the point of view of the world imperialist contradictions and of preparation of the new world imperialist war and of the attack against the Soviet Union. The bourgeois landlord government of Mexico seeking a solution of the crisis through a war especially looks for the financial support of the United States.

Resting upon this analysis of the economic and political situation of the country, the Plenum of the Central Committee declares that for us "the immediate and most urgent task consists in creating and strengthening during the course of economic and political struggles, the revolutionary trade union and peasant movement, and at the same time in building a strong mass Communist Party" but also establishes that "in the country there exist objective factors for a rapid development of events and that there is no wall nor definite division between the present situation of the acute economic crisis and the revolutionary crisis."

The Plenum adds "that upon the activity of our Party in realizing its immediate tasks depends in great part, whether or not there will occur one of those brusk and sudden explosions of which the thesis of the Twelfth Plenum speaks, on the basis of the sharpening of the economic crisis and of the revolutionary upsurge of the masses."

The Plenum established that the exploiting classes and the imperialists unload each day in a more brutal manner the weight of the crisis upon the working class and the exploited masses, that a more reactionary policy is being followed, aggravating the conditions of life of the masses (unemployment, wage cuts, deportation of hundreds of thousands of Mexican workers from the United States, the use of new methods to accelerate the liquidation

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of agrarian reforms, the increase of taxation, etc.). The use of the vilest social demagogy is accompanied at the same time by more violent methods of repression, such as the attacks on the hunger marchers, mass deportations to the Penal Island of the Three Marias, the destruction through armed force of the revolutionary textile workers' trade union of San Gruno, military occupation of Vera Cruz directed not so much at Tejeda as against the revolutionary workers and peasants, the disarming and the massacres of peasants in Vera Cruz and other States.

The nationalist and patriotic campaigns linked up with the offensive against the toilers and the small foreign-born storekeepers, serve to distract the attention of the discontented masses and to prepare the atmosphere for the entrance of the country into imperialist war.

The Trade Union Federation of the Federal District (which is influenced by the National Revolutionary Party (P.N.R.), and includes reformist and anarcho-reformist and government organizations is transformed into a new openly government-controlled trade union center which helps the government and the bosses, tries to impede and smash all mass struggles against the employers' offensive. The leaders of this Federation in order to succeed in this task effected a series of very characteristic "left" maneuvers using slogans such as "the fight against the Laborist Party, Morones and Co.," "For the unification of the proletariat." Under pressure of the masses they have called strikes in order to betray them and they have stated themselves in favor of "the declaration of a general strike in principle." The C.R.O.M., the regional workers' confederation of Mexico, even though weakened, continues holding masses and efficiently carries out its role as the assistant to the police and the employers. Particularly dangerous now are the reformist demagogues of the "left" as Lombardo Toledano, who have left the C.R.O.M. "fighting against Morones" and who can canalize the mass discontent, deviating the masses from mass revolutionary movement.

A similar role is played in the countryside by the State peasant organizations controlled by the Governors, politicians of the National Revolutionary Party, etc., and by the more or less national organizations such as the National Peasant League.

After the Plenum the reformist leaders began to maneuver in order to realign the trade union forces in accord with the interests of Yankee and British imperialism, in relation to war. The P.N.R., trade union federation, initiated the organization of Ibero-American workers' confederation which could serve as an effective substitute for the C.O.P.A. (Pan-American Workers' Confedera-

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tion) which had failed and had been exposed before the masses as an instrument of Yankee imperialism. In the meantime the C.R.O.M. ratified its affiliation to the C.O.P.A,, and Lombardo Toledano tries to seize the masses for the yellow Amsterdam International.

The development of strike struggles and the peasant movements as well as the activity of the Party and the C.S.U.M. (the Mexican Unitarian Trade Union Confederation) rose in the first half of 1932 and then rapidly declined. An important factor of the situation at the beginning of the year was the beginning of strikes in important enterprises (street-cars, telephones in the Federal District, the Southern-Pacific Railroad). There were also peasant uprisings in some States. The Party and the Unitarian Trade Union Confederation have succeeded in carrying through such mobilizations as the National Unemployed Day (February 27, 1932), demonstrations on May First, certain advances in the organization of economic struggles ("Asarco," metal foundry and the San Bruno textile factory) and has gained certain influence in the course of struggles led by reformists (street-car strike in the Federal District). The Plenum considers that due to, in the first place, the organizational and political weakness of the revolutionary trade union movement, the government and the employers succeeded in retarding the revolutionary mass upsurge. In addition, the Plenum indicated with due sharpness the serious weakening of the Party and the Y.C.L. both of which lost members and nuclei in all important districts; the recession of the unitarian unions and in general of all mass organizations under the influence and leadership of the Party; and raised an alarm regarding the situation, among the Party membership. The Plenum resolution states:

> "The situation of the Party and of the revolutionary movement in general, is very delicate and dangerous. It is necessary to react with energy to recover the lost ground, definitely consolidate the positions of the Party and the revolutionary mass organizations and to begin with firmness and decision a new advance."

Without underestimating the effects of the terror, which was unleashed with double force since June, it is evident that the main cause of the recession is opportunism in all its various forms—and above all opportunism in practice, which in the conditions of reaction is expressed especially in fear and cowardice, in panic, in inability to resist the police attacks.

The resolution of the Plenum says with justified sharpness that "in many places we have tolerated passive elements, cowards, systematic saboteurs of all revolutionary activity, political mummies, rotten members who not only detain the movement, but also inject

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passivity and cowardice into the mass of the Party members." On the other side of the open right opportunism and the right deviations we have the "left" attitudes, sectarianism, resistance to the united front from below and to work in reformist organizations, putschism, the outbursts "of those who only know how to speak through the mouths of their revolvers." A notable example of the consequences of right and "left" opportunism is the case of San Bruno, where grave reformist, laborist and Tejedist (illusions about Governor Tejeda as a "revolutionary") faults prepared the ground and created the conditions for the destruction of the revolutionary union and the Party nucleus.

Sharp expressions of opportunism are: the lack of understanding and passivity in the face of the Vera Cruz problem and in general in face of the disarming and murders of peasants, the abandonment of the struggle against imperialist war, the sabotage of electoral activity, the failure to observe the minimum rules of conspiracy, etc., the Plenum addressed "an energetic and flaming call to all active committees, nuclei and members of the Party and the Y.C.L. to launch a broad, merciless attack against opportunism in all its forms in order "to get rid of all rotten and incorrigible opportunist elements and help the mistaken and unprepared comrades to correct their errors and better their work," so as to "cleanse, invigorate and activize the Party from top to bottom."

However, it was recorded that the Party and the revolutionary trade union movement succeeded in carrying on certain mass activity, in the midst of violent repression. This was shown in the August Hunger Marches and in the increase of influence in certain important sections of the proletariat (railroad, street-car workers in the Federal District, etc.). At the end of 1932, there could be seen new life in the work, though very weak as yet, but worthy of note in certain regions, and today we can speak of some small successes. Numerous facts prove the orientation of important sections of the masses leftward: the growth of Party influence and that of the C.S.U.M. among the miners of the State of Chihuahua, the enthusiastic acceptance of our propaganda among the printers and textile workers of the Federal District, the approval of the proposals of the League for a United Railway Workers' Union (affiliated to the C.S.U.M.) by the recent railroad workers' congress and the election of some Communists and unitarian workers to leading posts in various sections of the Railroad Workers' Union; our participation, important although weak, in the agitation among the teachers, and in the telegraph operators strike; and above all our major participation in the leadership of the strike movement

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of 2000 agricultural peons (laborers) of Michoacan (the haciendas of "Lombardia" and "Nueva Italia").

We are witnessing the maturing of great mass movements in important enterprises such as the street-car and telephone in the Federal District, railroads, textile industry, etc. The discontent of the poorer sections of the petty-bourgeoisie is evident, and the telegraph operators' strike (which paralyzed all government telegraphic service in the whole country for more than three days) has shown that important sectors of the exploited population, until now passive, are entering into activity in the present situation: such examples we also witness among the market merchants, tenants, users of electric light, etc. In the countryside, together with a whole series of strikes of agricultural workers, we witness the struggle of the peasants against the reactionary policy of the government, against taxes, terror, disarmament, etc., and for land, this struggle reaching in certain regions the degree of direct seizure of land by force. In some States there are groups of peasant guerillas.

"The immediate perspective," affirms the resolution, "is of a new upsurge of the revolutionary struggle. It depends upon our activity to transform this upsurge rapidly into a general upward swing of the movement."

It is clear that the first and basic precondition for the forward march of the Party and the revolutionary trade union movement is the application of the directives of the Twelfth Plenum regarding the struggle for the daily economic and political interests of the toiling masses, which is "the main link which the Communist Parties must seize" in order to carry out their tasks in the present moment.

Because of this, the Central Committee gave great attention to the problems of the economic struggles and the trade union work, of the united front from below, and the independent leadership of economic struggles, of work within the reformist and anarcho-reformist organizations and of struggle against the yellow trade union leaders, unmasking their maneuvers on the basis of their concrete deeds (especially concentrating on the "lefts" such as Lombardo Toledano and also including the demagogues of the National Revolutionary Party, the followers of Tejeda, etc.), of work among the unemployed and the deportees from the U.S.A., which has more political importance in Mexico than in many other countries, of the organization and leadership of strikes (experiences of San Bruno, Asarco, La Imperial, Lombardia, Nueva Italia, etc.), and of the development and consolidation of the revolutionary trade union movement. Trade union activity is the most important sector of the Party's work and every Communist must make himself an

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active trade union militant. The Plenum decided to mobilize the Party for the preparation of the National United Front Conference called by the C.S.U.M. (in which we were very far behind and not in accord with the existing possibilities).

Reaching the conclusion of the analysis of the situation made by the Plenum, that the Party and the C.S.U.M. are isolated from the fundamental masses of the proletariat, the Plenum proposed to the Party, the concrete and rational application of the methods of concentration in the most important industries (oil, mining, transport, etc.), and especially among the agricultural workers.

In the countryside the immediate problem is the organization of the fight for the partial peasant demands, organizing the Peasant United Front Committees and building and strengthening the Regional Revolutionary Peasant Leagues at the same time. The discontent of the peasants against the forcible division of the "ejidal" (communal) lands (one of the forms adopted in the present situation to accelerate the liquidation of the agrarian reforms) must be taken advantage of in order to lead the peasantry into struggle for more and better land, and according to the general line of the Seventh Party Conference, to extend and broaden this struggle up to the seizure and the mass defense of the land (as has already been begun, although in a weak manner, in the States of Nuevo Leon and Oaxaca). An important role must be played by the "Peasant Primer" (Cartilla del Campesino), which brings together the immediate demands of the peasant masses and by the program of the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc, purged of their reformist and "agrarian" errors which were already indicated by the Seventh Conference. Of course, at the same time it is necessary to propagate constantly, as against government "agrarism," the central demand of the agrarian anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution —"the confiscation without indemnity of all lands and means of cultivation of the native landowners and the imperialist enterprises, and their free distribution among the peons, and poor and middle peasants" and to insis on the necessity of the revolutionary alliance of the peasants with the proletariat and the leading role of the latter.

In the center of attention of the whole Party we have placed the question of mass mobilization for the struggle against the military terror of Vera Cruz, against the disarming and the murdering of peasants, this being a political question of national importance linked up with the reactionary program of the government, with the struggle of the bourgeois landlord factions, and with the preparations of the government to take part in the South-

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American wars, and also with the strategic problem of the alliance of the working class and the peasantry.

The results of the first efforts to apply the decisions of the Seventh Conference among the Indians (election campaign of the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc in Juchitan) are altogether insufficient from the point of view of propaganda and altogether nil from the point of view of organization. It is necessary to initiate patient work of organization and of struggle for the partial demands of the Indians, correcting the resolution of the Seventh Conference where it limits the struggle for the right to self-determination for the Indian nations, and propagate the demand broadly.

In the field of organization of the Party we have ratified and strengthened the general line of the Conference, the most essential points of which were: planned activity from top to bottom, transformation of the nuclei into living organs that direct the mass struggles in the enterprises, villages and cities, creation and development of future district committees and the establishment of the work of the committees and nuclei on a conspirative basis; combining adequately this work with legal mass activity and organizing at the same time the struggle against provocations and espionage; and so one of the essential political and organizational tasks—the development of leading cadres and the strengthening of self-criticism and the proletarianization of the leadership of the Party.

We have adopted concrete decisions about the problems of the *Machete*, the central organ of the Party, about agit-prop work (especially regarding the Marx Campaign, Paris Commune, etc.), regarding the Party's work in building the Y.C.L. and the mass non-Party organizations, about activity in the armed forces, etc.

We decided to organize the struggle against the participation of Mexico in the South-American war and against the war itself, linking up this struggle with the fight against imperialist war in general and against the preparation of intervention against the Soviet Union. The Plenum decided upon the mobilization of masses for February 28, the day of the inauguration of the Latin-American Anti-War Congress.

In regard to the problem of the bourgeois landlord factional struggle, the essential point is the fight against Tejeda and Tejedism, not only among the broad worker and peasant masses but also against the theory of the lesser evil (Tejeda is "better" than others) within the Party and within the workers' and peasants' revolutionary movement. In relation with this we took up the election campaign of the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc, the popularization and the discussion of the program and the preparation of the National Convention of the Workers' and Peasants'

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Bloc, which should decide on a program and designate a candidate for the President of the Republic.

The Plenum resolution also refers to certain political and theoretical questions (character of the revolution, internal motive forces of the bourgeois-landlord factional struggle, the role of the imperialists in this struggle, etc.), which were left to be clarified by the Political Bureau which should organize the discussion in the lower organs of the Party. Finally the Central Committee, assigned itself the task of cooperating in the building up of the Parties in the countries of Central America.

Such are the decisions and directives of the Plenum of the Central Committee. Now there is the task of moving and activizing the Party in order to apply these directives.

> "We must," says the resolution, "begin the sharpest struggle against right opportunism—the main danger—and against 'leftism' which covers and strengthens it. The Party must guard itself against any opportunist interpretation of the thesis of the Twelfth Plenum in relation to the lagging behind of the development of the revolutionary crisis in Mexico and also against possible putschist impatience, against any attempt to skip stages in the development of the situation.
>
> "We must inject within the masses of the Party membership, revolutionary enthusiasm, confidence in the correct line of the Communist International, confidence in its victory. We must fight without let up for the proletarianization and Bolshevization of the Party, for the building of a true mass Communist Party, with Leninist, capable and steeled leading cadres; to win in the course of the daily struggles the masses of workers and peasants who *today follow the reformists, Tejeda and the National Revolutionary* Party.
>
> "Realizing its immediate tasks, according with the decisions of the Twelfth Plenum, our Party will create the conditions for the development of the revolutionary crisis in Mexico."

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Marx and Working Class Unity

By ANDRE MARTY

THE trend of development of the class struggle in the period of deepest capitalist crisis is yet another clear proof to wide sections of the proletariat of the fallacy of the illusion that the working class can expect any improvement of their position from "peaceful collaboration" with the bourgeoisie, as advocated many years by social democracy. Vast masses of workers are being imbued with an understanding of the correctness of Marx' words: "The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself." The working masses are being convinced on the basis of their own experience, that the most serious obstacle to realizing this historic task of the working class is the scattered proletarian fighting front, and the lack of a common aim on the part of the working class during its fights. The desire for unity in the struggle against the bourgeoisie is spreading to broad sections of the workers, who have hitherto lent ear to the social-democratic practice of unity with the bourgeoisie, and hostility to the revolutionary workers. They now raise their voices for unity with these same revolutionary workers, in order, with their combined, unanimous forces, to restrain the capitalist advance and overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie. The working-class masses are rejecting the "strategic recipe" of counter-revolutionary Trotskyism, which proposes that two detachments of the one working class should "advance separately and strike together." They want to march into the fight together, and not hinder their decisive struggle, or be beaten separately.

The problem of unity of the working class in its intensifying class struggle against the bourgeoisie has now become one of the central questions of the international revolutionary movement. The pressure from the working masses who are striving for the unity of the working class has forced even the most arrant reformist splitters, who sabotage the fight of the working class, to pretend that they are zealous apostles of unity. Social-democracy in all countries is doing its utmost to throw the blame for a split in the working class, during class battles, upon the "sectarian," "one-sided," "intolerant" Communists. "Bolshevik sectarianism," declares the leader of the "left"-wing of the French Socialist Party, Zyromski, "which brought about the split, still remains the chief ob-

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stacle to uniting the forces of the working class."* "The Communist International is nothing but a splitting organization on an international scale," writes Schifrin, the Menshevik theoretician, of German social-democracy.†

The working class was united until the Communists separated from social-democracy; therefore, the Communists must be made to reject their "exaggerations," their "dogmatism," and it will be then possible to set up the "old broad unity" by "peaceful agreement" between the Communists and Social Democrats—this is the somewhat simple social-democratic thesis. Vandervelde most significantly reminds us of the "unity" realized in the pre-war Second International. "There was a time," said he,‡ "on the even of the world war, when there existed international socialist unity, from the ultra-moderate English trade unions, from Henderson and MacDonald, to Lenin, to the most extreme representatives of revolutionary "social-democracy." Masked subjection, behind centrist phrases, of the interests of the workers, who stand for class war, to the petty-bourgeois interests of opportunist collaboration with the bourgeoisie, inside the framework of the pre-war unity of the Second International—this is the "ideal of unity," by which Vandervelde, Friedrich Adler, Paul Louis and Co. want to draw the attention of the working masses from their joint struggle against the bourgeoisie. And, moreover, they talk in the name of Marxism, whose principles, they say, demand "unity" of this kind. Paul Louis, the leader of the "Proletarian Unity Party," the bourgeois fattened group of Communist renegades, demands, for example, "unity obtained in the light of Marxist principles" and interprets this to mean unprincipled amalgamation and unity of the Communists with the Social Democrats by way of diplomatic negotiations, round a green biaze table, and the rejection of the united front struggle of the working masses against the bourgeoisie.

But is this the true road to the unity of the working class as taught by the founders of scientific Socialism, Marx and Engels, the first mighty leaders and organizers of the Socialist working-class movement?

In the history of the international working-class movement, the Communists of the Third International were not the first to be accused of a "splitting mania" of "fanaticism," of a "craving for power" and intolerance towards other "also Socialist" tendencies. They share this fate with Marx and Engels. The Proud-

* *Bataille socialiste*, November, 1932.

† *Gesellschaft*, January, 1933.

‡ *Europe Nouvelle*, December 24, 1932.

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honists and Bakuninists, the opportunists in the ranks of German social-democracy and the Possibilists in France, untiringly accused the gifted leaders of the "Communist League" and the International, both during their lifetime and after their death, of the very same sins; and Marx' and Engels' intolerance towards them was regarded as violation of the unity of the working class. All the efforts of social democracy to depict Marx and Engels as the founders of the fetishism of unprincipled unity, of the kind to be found in the Second International of the pre-war period, came to grief against hard historical facts. Not the Bolsheviks and the Third International, but the Second International, long before the world war, flung all the traditions of Marx' leadership of the First International on the question of unity, and all the direct and unambiguous reminders of Marx and Engels on this question, into the dustbin.

Marx and Engels were sterling fighters for working-class unity. During the entire course of their lives, they waged a ruthless struggle, crowned with splendid results, against everything that was a hindrance to working-class unity in the class struggle of the proletariat. They untiringly fought against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois influences, which restrained the working class from the class struggle, and the corporate and national limitations of those who, confused in their own narrow class interests and national prejudices, could not perceive the general class interests of the international proletariat; the sect which was for "reviving peace," which counter-poised their recipes promising bliss to the mass movement of the workers. For the struggle against capitalist rule and the influence of the democratic petty-bourgeoisie upon the proletariat, in order to overcome sectarianism and national limitations, they created the International Working Men's Association, the first organization of international revolutionary working-class unity. They considered it of immense importance that the working class should be united in its economic and political battles against the bourgeoisie.

> "All efforts aiming at that great end have hitherto failed from the want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labor in each country, and from the absence of a fraternal bond of union between the workers of different countries,"—

wrote Marx in the Preamble to the Constitution of the First International.

Marx and Engels fought implacably against sectarian "ultra-left" denial of working-class unity, against the rejection of the unification of the working-class mass, who had not reached a high

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level of class-consciousness. Communists are not splitters, but the organizers of the working masses in their struggle against the bourgeoisie. Whereas:

> "...a sect seeks the *raison d'etre* of its existence in its *point d'honneur*, not in that which it has in *common* with the class movement, but in *the special talisman* (*besonderen schibbolet*) which makes it different from that movement,"*

The *Communist Manifesto* on the other hand, emphasizes the fact that the Communists—

> " . . . have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.... The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be reformer.
>
> "They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes." †

Therefore the Communists are in no way aloof from the partial interests of the working class, but they always link them up with the common interests of the working class as a whole, with the "interests of the future," with the revolutionary prospects of the movement; and subject the partial interests to the common interests of the whole working class. Hence the fact that the Communists march forward and fight together, not merely with those sections of the working class who share their Communist views, but also with all those workers who are more or less class-conscious, who more or less clearly orientate upon and participate in, the various forms of the "existing class struggle."

> "I think," wrote Engels, referring to the experience of the First International, "that the whole of our practical activity has proved that the common movement of the working class can be adhered to all points along its march, without losing or concealing the principles of the working class movement or even its organization.‡

Engels on no account was imagining any sort of unity between Communists and other tendencies in the working-class movement in the form of a compulsory "organizational bloc"; his idea was unity in the form of joint struggle against the class enemy, with the safeguarding of complete freedom of criticism as soon as the joint fight ended or the conditions of struggle were violated. His

* Marx' letter to Schweitzer, October, 1868.

† *Communist Manifesto*, International Publishers.

‡ Letter to Wishneshevzky, January 27, 1887.

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idea was that, as a general rule, there should be organizational independence for the class-conscious elements among the working class.

Moreover, Marx and Engels never expected to realize unity even in those countries where unity among various groups and sects was an urgent matter of the day, where it was not a question, of course, of incongruous unity between petty-bourgeois and revolutionary tendencies as a result of negotiations and agreements on the part of the leaders, but was dependent upon "achieving" unity from below as the work of the masses, i.-e., when the class-conscious ("independent") workers are given the parliamentary tribune from which they can influence the more backward sections of the workers.

In his letter to Sorge, on the position of the English movement, Engels wrote:

> " There is not the slightest chance of getting any sort of unity among the workers' leaders. But nevertheless the masses are moving forward, true, slowly, and the while fighting for consciousness, but nevertheless quite obviously. Things here will go as they did in France, and previously in Germany: unity will be won as soon as there is a certain number of independent workers in parliament."*

Marx and Engels severely censored all sectarians who kept themselves aloof from the still non-revolutionary working masses under the pretext of "pure ideas" or even "faith" in Marxist doctrine, accepted as a dogma. It is impossible to overlook the ideological and political backwardness of wide working masses; it must be overcome by criticism, by the class-conscious elements in the working-class movement assuming the leadership in the process of joint struggle on the basis of the experiences of the working masses themselves.

Engels, arguing against the sectarianism of the American Socialists who neglected the class struggle in their zeal to safeguard the purity of the faith, wrote as follows to Wishneshevzky:

> "The best way to find theoretical clarity of conception is to learn from your own mistakes, to learn wisdom at the expense of your own losses. And there is no other way for a mighty class."†

"Overlooking" the backwardness of the working masses has always been the source of sectarian denial of working-class unity; it was so not only during Marx' time. Lenin and Stalin, as pursuers of Marx' line of working-class unity in the struggle against

* Engels' letter to Sorge, May 12, 1894.

† Karl Marx and F. Engels: *Letters*, Moscow edition, 1931, page 356.

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the bourgeoisie, also fought against the idea of "overlooking" the backwardness of the reformist working masses, which at one time was advocated by Trotsky (on the question of the Anglo-Russian Committee) and the "ultra-lefts" in capitalist countries.

However, Marx and Engles were also valiant fighters against proletarian unity with the petty-bourgeoisie; they were in the front line of the struggle to separate the working-class from all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements, groups and tendencies, which were trying inside the ranks of the working-class movement—frequently under the name of "Socialists"—to deaden the class struggle, to restrain the workers from the class struggle. Marx and Engels, interpreting working-class unity to mean unity in the class struggle against the bourgeoisie, never refused to enter into an energetic struggle against all varieties of opportunism, of those who carried the influence of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie into the movement of the working masses on the pretext of maintaining "unity."

The proletariat is not isolated from the remaining classes of bourgeois society. The bourgeoisie has at its command innumerable means of influencing separate sections of the working-class, and individual groups in the working-class movement. Bourgeois and petty-bourgeois influence, inherent in the very essence of bourgeois society, is the greatest obstacle to working-class unity in the struggle for its genuine class interests. Consequently, Marx and Engles waged determined warfare during their whole lives to root out the agents of the bourgeoisie from the ranks of the working-class movement, to isolate petty-bourgeois tendencies from the working-class masses.

> "In a petty-bourgeois country, like Germany," wrote Marx and Engels in 1879 to the German Social Democratic leaders, "these (bourgeois and petty-bourgeois) ideas are certainly justified, but only *outside* the social democratic working-class party. If these gentlemen want to form a social-democratic, petty-bourgeois party, they have a perfect right to so so. Then we could negotiate with them to form a bloc, etc., under certain conditions. But inside the working-class party they are a foreign element. . . . The break with them is only a matter of time."

Thus, in their epoch, when the petty-bourgeoisie still played a much more independent role than during the epoch of imperialism, Marx and Engels considered it possible to negotiate with petty-bourgeois tendencies on the question of the fight against the common enemy, but they categorically protested against "organized unity" with petty-bourgeois Socialists. On the other hand, when deciding upon tactics, they always took the degree of maturity of the masses who had come into the movement into consideration, and never

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refused to fight against opportunist leaders, for they considered that to isolate them was the first step necessary in raising the class-consciousness of the masses to higher plane.

Engels, writing to Bernstein on November 11, 1884, in connection with the spread of mass social-democratic influence in the backward parts of Germany, said:

> "We cannot bring the masses over to our side, if they do not gradually develop. Frankfurt, Munchen, Koenigsberg cannot become proletarian centers like Saxony, Berlin and the coal-mining districts. Petty-bourgeois elements among the leaders will for a time find among the masses here just the background they have lacked up to now. That which for some has been so far a reactionary tendency may now be produced here, on a local scale, as an essential feature of progressive development. This would require a change in tactics, so that the masses would be led forward, and the worst leaders prevented from coming to the top."

The struggle against right and "left" opportunism as a form of foreign class influence in the ranks of the working-class movement, and of the proletarian party, was considered an essential factor by Marx and Engels in connection with the maintenance of the class character of the working-class movement, the only means capable of facilitating working-class unity against the bourgeoisie. Therefore sentimental "considerations of unity" have never blunted Marx' and Engels' sharp criticism on two fronts.

They never glossed over a situation where a split in the party was inevitable, and were for unity only in so far as unity served the interests of the class struggle. They never made a fetish of unity, and a large part of the fight during their lifetime was fought to separate the working-class movement from other tendencies, was against the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois, right opportunist and sectarian policies, which, in one form or another, had become an obstacle to the joint struggle of the working-class against the bourgeoisie.

Engels, writing to Bebel on the split in the French Party between the Guesde supporters and the "Possibilists" (October 28, 1882), said:

> "Unity is a fine thing while it is possible, but some things are more important that unity. He who for a lifetime has fought like Marx and I have, against fake socialists more than against anybody else (we looked upon the bourgeoisie as a class and hardly ever engaged in encounters with individual bourgeois)—will never be alarmed because the inevitable struggle has come upon us."

Marx and Engels mercilessly condemned opportunist, utterances about unity at the expense of weakening the class struggle and the "licentious passion for fraternizing with all those who declared

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their views to be Socialist." They declared that to advocate such unprincipled unity actually facilitated and camouflaged the split of the working-class in its class battles.

"We must not let ourselves be confused with shouts about 'unity,'" wrote Engels to Bebel. "It is just those who talk most about this slogan who are the chief inciters to splits; for instance, the Bakuninists today, the Swiss "Uties," who are the inciters of all the splits, and who talk of nothing so much as of unity. These unity fanatics are either mediocre, and want to mix all and sundry into one indefinite mass, which has only to be left for a while and the various elements thrown into one heap will come into more acute contradiction among themselves (in Germany you have an excellent example of this in the gentlemen who advocate conciliation between the workers and the petty-bourgeois); or else they are people who unconsciously (like, for example, Muhlberger), or consciously, want to falsify the movement. This is why these inveterate sectarians, mighty political mischief-makers, and scoundrels, at times, drown all others in shouting for unity. We have never had so much unpleasantness and trouble with anyone in our whole lives as with these noisy advocators of unity."*

Marx and Engels interpreted it as an essential dialectical process that *the working-class should be extensively united for class struggle, and should break determinedly with all elements representing bourgeois and petty-bourgeois influences, all the internal enemies of the working-class movement.* Unity against the bourgeoisie is impossible without separation from those tendencies which had become an obstacle in the process of development of the working-class movement, had become enemies of the class struggle.

In his letters, Engles more than once mentioned the dialectics of unity and splits.

> "Incidentally, old Hegel said that the party which, having *made a split,* is able to withstand the split, has already proved in practice that its victory is assured. The movement of the proletariat inevitably progresses through different stages of development; at each stage people are left behind who can go no further."
>
> "Apparently," wrote Engels in another letter, "every working-class party in the large countries can develop only through internal struggles, as the dialectic laws of development dictate. The German Party became what it is in the fight of the Eisenachers and Lassallians, in which the actual fight itself played the most important role. Unity became possible only when the band of lumpen-proletarians, who had been moderately educated by Lassalle, as his weapons, had concluded their work."†

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* Letter to Bebel, June 20, 1873.

† Letter to Bernstein, October 20, 1882.

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Bourgeois and petty-bourgeois tendencies "conclude their work," i.e., become isolated from the masses in the process of class struggle, and this goes forward more quickly, the greater the mass of workers taking part in the struggle, and the more the masses free themselves from the influences of these tendencies on the basis of their own experience. Thus the united front becomes the necessary factor, in realizing the exodus of the working masses from groups who have already played their part in the ranks of the working-class movement, and becomes the starting point for working-class unity on a higher plane.

Only from the viewpoint of this dialectic conception of working-class unity is it possible to understand the concrete position taken up by Marx and Engels on the questions of unity and splits, in the working-class movement of their time. The First International is a brilliant example of this. The International Workingmen's Association set itself the task of uniting the scattered proletarian groups and sects for joint struggle and joint action; and in the fire of this struggle sectarianism was overcome, the petty-bourgeois leaders of the sects were isolated, and the working-class was raised to a higher level of class unity. To achieve this end, Marx limited the practical tasks of the International to "points upon which the workers could directly agree and act jointly."* However, when the Bakuninist tendency became strong, and together with conditions created in the European working-class movement after the fall of the Paris Commune, threatened to convert the First International, under Bakuninist leadership, into an obstacle to further class struggle, Marx unwaveringly preferred that the First International should retain its undivided proletarian character, even at the price of temporary ruin, rather than have unprincipled unity inside the International. On this subject Engels writes as follows:

> "All kinds of good-for-nothings have attached themselves to the International. The sectarians already there have become bold and abused their affiliation to the International hoping that they would be allowed to commit enormous follies and low tricks. We would not stand this. Knowing full well that the bubble must burst some time or another, we tried not to let the catastrophe drag on, but to bring the International out of it pure and untainted. At The Hague the bubble burst. . . . Now the sectarian mischiefmakers are advocating conciliation and shout aloud that we are intactable, that we are dictators. Yet if at The Hague we had behaved compromisingly, if we had glossed over the maturing split, what would the consequences have been? The sectarians, i.e., the Bakuninists, would have had additional time at their disposal to

* Marx' letter to Kugelman, October 9, 1866. See *Letters*, Russian edition, p. 260.

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> commit even greater follies and do even greater mischief in the name of the International; the workers of the most advanced countries would have turned away in disgust, the bubble would not have burst, but would have gradually contracted as though pricked with a pin, and the coming Congress, that at which the crisis should have come, would have been converted into the meanest, most scandalous brawl since the whole principle had been sacrificed already at the Hague. Then would the International indeed have been ruined, ruined by 'unity.'"

After the downfall of the First International, Marx and Engels continued their energetic struggle both against the sectarian aversions of the Socialists to the non-Socialist working masses, and "cries on behalf of unity at any price" with petty-bourgeois tendencies. In England and in the United States, where the proletariat still had no independent Communist Party, where the bourgeoisie held considerable political and ideological influence over the working-class, Marx and Engels fought first and foremost against sectarianism, and for unity between various sects and workers' groups inside one political party, independent of the bourgeoisie.

In Germany and France, where there already existed more or less Marxist, independent parties, Marx and Engels considered petty-bourgeois tendencies in the working-class movement, and unprincipled unity with "Socialist" representatives of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois interests, the chief danger. They consequently warned German social-democracy primarily against "glossing over contradictions by dissolving them in phrases" and against the consequences of uniting with opportunist, petty-bourgeois tendencies. In 1875 Marx and Engels warned the leaders of the Eisenach party against uniting with the Lassallians. When unity was, nevertheless, attained at the price of unprincipled concessions on the part of the Eisenachers, Marx and Engels assumed a hostile attitude towards them.

> "We know how the actual fact of working-class unity is satisfying," wrote Marx in his famous letter to Bracke,* "but he is mistaken who believes that this momentary success is not bought at too high a price."

Four years later, the open activities of the opportunist Hechberg-Bernstein-Schramm group forced Marx and Engels to sharply raise the question of separating from these petty-bourgeois tendencies. From that time onwards Engels constantly reminded the German social-democratic leaders of the need to prepare for the inevitable break with the petty-bourgeois wing of the party.

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* Letter to Bracke of May 3, 1875.

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> "As soon as we have sufficient elbow-room again in Germany," . . . . wrote Engels to Sorge in 1885, "there will be a split and this will be to our advantage. A petty-bourgeois Socialist Party is inevitable in a country like Germany, where the petty-bourgeoisie, even more than historical rights, *keine Daten nicht hat.* *

Engels saw clearly that the majority in the parliamentary fraction of the German, social-democracy was passing to the side of the bourgeoisie, and during the last year of his life he severely condemned all unprincipled "wailings about unity" which only created conciliatory tendencies to the opportunist Volmaar group which almost represented the usual type of popular party inside the Party. †

In France the working-class movement developed in a different direction corresponding to the economic and social structure of the country. There was a split in the working-class party between the French Marxists, led by Guesde, and the Possibilists, who represented the opportunist tendency. Although Marx and Engels were well aware of Guesde's weak points, they nevertheless made common cause with his party when it separated from the Possibilist minority.

> "The long expected split has occurred in France," wrote Engels to Bebel (October 28, 1882). "They are purely differences of principle as to whether the fight should be a class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, or whether it is permissible to opportunistically renounce the class character of the movement and the program, in cases where more votes and more supporters could be obtained by doing so. Malon and Brousse were in favor of the latter, and thus they were for sacrificing the proletarian class character of the movement and made a split inevitable."

In 1893, when, as a result of successes won in the elections by the parties which called themselves Socialist, the parliamentary fractions, of all the Socialist Parties from Millerand to the Guesdists, united, Engels, who had no confidence whatever in this unprincipled unity, wrote to Sorge as follows on December 30, 1893:

> "Concentration is the slogan in France today, and I shall be glad if it does not also mean capitulation on the part of all the Socialists to the Millerandists, whose practical program, without doubt, is considerably more radical than the Socialists."

The French Socialists did not take Engels' advice and the result was the disgraceful work of Millerand.

One of the two leaders of the International Workingmen's Association—Engels—lived to see the birth of the Second Interna-

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* Literally: "has no dates," i.e. to great historical traditions.

† Letter to Sorge, December 20, 1894.

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tional. He did everything in his power to ensure that the Second International should be formed under the hegemony of the revolutionary proletariat, and not under the leadership of the petty-bourgeois Possibilists; that it should serve the interests of the class struggle, and not class conciliation. He fought a stubborn fight around the question of convening the First Congress of the Second International, against the Possibilists and the conciliators who wanted to unite the Possibilist and Socialist Congresses, in the latter of which the Marxists were playing the leading role. "The conciliation bubble in Paris has burst," Engels wrote joyfully to Sorge, after the unsuccessful effort to unite these parallel congresses. "Our sentimental conciliators, for all their expressions of friendship, deserve to get this hearty slap. . . . It will probably cure them for a time." However, Engels fought with the same energy for separation between the Second International and the anarchists, and welcomed the decision of the Brussels Congress of the Second International which excluded them, just as he had spoken in favor of a break with the German anarchist group headed by Most, and later in favor of the "youth" group separating from the working-class party. The fight on two fronts inside the working-class movement, which was untiringly waged by Marx and Engels, proves that it is one of the most important factors of struggle against the bourgeoisie.

However, after Engels' death, the Second International entirely rejected Marx' viewpoint on the need for separating the working-class from petty-bourgeois elements and bourgeois agents. The unity which existed for the fifteen years before the imperialist war till 1914 inside the International, and which is so much praised to-day by Vandervelde and others, was built upon an absolute denial of Marx' principle of class unity, built upon a fetishism of unity, independent of whether unity serves the interests of the proletarian class struggle or not. This unity was not unity of the working masses for the struggle against the bourgeoisie, but it "subjected the interests of the proletariat to those of the petty-bourgeoisie *inside one party*" (Stalin). The centrists, who united with the revisionists, ministerialists, and liquidators under the slogan of unconditional unity of the working-class movement, were actually pursuing a policy of subjecting proletarian interests to the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie. The contradictions were glossed over and the unity was false. The Bolsheviks alone fought determinedly and consistently in the spirit of Marx and Engels both in Russia, and in the International, to break this false unity, to break this bloc between proletarian and petty-bourgeois interests, and to separate the working class from reformists and centrists. The unprincipled

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unity of the pre-war International, so valuable a weapon to Messrs. Vandervelde and Friedrich Adler, led to the "burgfrieden" (class peace) of August 4th, to the paralysing and breakdown of working-class resistance to the world imperialist war, to a split in the working-class in the post-war period into the Central, and the Western, European proletariat. The pre-war Second International was ruined by unity. Marx's "policy of a split" the consistent struggle of the Bolsheviks on two fronts, on the contrary, led to the realization "from below" of practical unity among the decisive sections of the proletariat in Russia in their struggle against Tsarism and the bourgeoisie; it led to the conquest of power by the proletariat. Following the road indicated by Marx towards working-class unity by means of splits, the Bolsheviks realized unity.

Under enormous pressure from the Socialist workers who are striving for a united front of struggle side by side with the Communists, a new manoeuvre of considerable dimensions is being adopted. The Social Democrats are now proposing to cease the "old quarrels," to forget the past and establish unity between the "two working-class parties"; but at the same time they are sabotaging the united front of working-class struggle which is already approaching. The agreement between the Communists and Social Democrats of Hungary in March, 1919, and their unity on the platform of all power to the Soviets, despite the "organic unity," in spite of the common platform, did not prevent the Hungarian Social Democrats from disorganizing the Hungarian Soviet Republic from inside, and smashing the power of the Hungarian proletariat. And in 1922 social-democracy used the conference of the three internationals to adopt counter-revolutionary, extortionary manoeuvres to the Soviet Union, and for the purpose of new manoeuvres calculated to split the struggle of the international proletariat. But only a few weeks ago the German Social Democratic Party proposed that unity be realized, and at the same time, in the very same appeal, it rejected the proposal of the Communists concerning joint action in conducting a general strike against Hitler, and called upon the workers to "maintain order" and not to open fire "prematurely," thus clearing the way for the fascists. Social-democracy consistently subjects all "organic unity" of the working-class movement, and all "joint positions" occupied by workers' organizations, to the cause of deceiving the working-class and treacherously handling it over to the bourgeoisie. It wants to restore unhindered subjection of proletarian interests to bourgeois interests under the banner of unity. It wants to lead the proletariat to a new form of "class peace." It wants once to paralyze the impending decisive proletarian struggle.

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The Communist International advocates working-class unity in the struggle against the bourgeoisie. The Communists of the Third International, like the Communists at the time of the *Communist Manifesto*, "have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole," and their policy does not lead to "splitting the working-class." They certainly are "one-sided" as regards the proletarian revolution and on behalf of proletarian dictatorship; but this is the only road incidated by Marx, to the emancipation of the working-class *as a whole*, by the working-class. They certainly are "fanatically" in solidarity with the interests of the first proletarian State in the world. However, the fate of the Soviet Union, the stable fortress of Socialism, is insolubly linked up with the interests of the proletariat of all lands. They certainly violated the "class peace" advocated by the bourgeoisie and its social-democratic agents. They certainly failed to safeguard "unity" with the Noske detachments, they certainly make sharp breaks with traitors to the interests of the working-class.

For the Communist International is leading the proletariat along the road to unity indicated by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

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Marxism and Peasant Question

By H. PURO

IN view of the present situation, marked by the ending of capitalist stabilization, with the resultant upsurge not only of the revolutionary proletarian movement, but also of the militant movement among the American farmers, it is particularly essential for us to pay close attention to the Marxian teachings on the peasant question.

Marx dealt with the peasant question very extensively, with both the reactionary and revolutionary trends and possibilities among the peasantry. In his *Classical Struggles in France* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, particularly, Marx analyzes very extensively the role of the peasants in the class conflicts of that historic period.

Speaking of the events and social class forces that made it possible for Louis Bonaparte to reestablish the monarchy, Marx describes the conditions that brought about a change of mood in the French peasantry, which objectively aided Bonaparte's counter-revolutionary aims that brought about the situation of which Engels, in his preface to *The Eighteenth Brumaire* says:

> "While the Parisian proletariat was still gloating over the great prospects opened up by the revolution, and while the workers were engaged in the earnest discussion of social problems, the old forces of society had come together, had taken counsel, and had secured unexpected support from the masses of the nation—from the peasants and petty bourgeoisie."

Marx tells us why the French peasantry, which had supported the revolution of 1848, turned to aid the counter-revolutionary forces. He says:

> "France contains a wine-growing population of about twelve millions. That makes it easy to understand the hatred of the people in general and, particularly, the fanaticism of the peasants against the wine tax.... The peasants have a way of historic tradition that is all their own, handed down from father to son. In this historic school it is rumored that every government that wants to deceive the peasants will promise the abolition of the wine tax, and, as soon as it has deceived the peasants, will either retain or reintroduce the wine tax."

Marx explains, how, the Constituent Assembly, after promising to abolish the wine tax by January 1, 1850, reestablished the

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tax, "so that the French people continuously chased that tax, and, having kicked it out of doors, saw it come back through the window."

Marx describes in detail the conditions of the growing re-enslavement of the French peasantry during the various revolutionary periods. He shows how the increasing exactions of land prices from the "freed" peasantry took the place of the feudal imposts, rents, tithes, forced labor, etc., which their serf-ancestors had paid before 1789:

> "And so it came about that the French peasants, in the form of interest on mortgages attached to the soil, in the form of interest on unsecured loans usury, yielding to the capitalists, in one word, not only his entire net profit, but also a part of the labor wages, and that he sank down to the level of the Irish tenant—all this on the pretext of being the owner of private property."
>
> "Revolutions are the locomotives of history," Marx exclaims, describing how there conditions of peasants brought about the situation where, "this revolutionizing of the most stationary class comes to the fore most strikingly after the reintroduction of the wine tax."

Marx proceeds to describe how, after the reintroduction of the wine tax, governmental measures and laws during January and February, 1850, were directed almost exclusively against the provinces and the peasants. These repressive measures "made attack and resistance the talk of the day in every hut." "They inoculated the revolution in every village, they localized and 'peasantized' the revolution."

The peasantry was in revolt against bourgeois rule, but it was leaderless and unclear as to its objective, Bonaparte, who desired to become the absolute "Chief of State," in a reincarnated Napoleon, utilized the revolting spirit of the peasantry, who had been abandoned to oppression by the bourgeoisie, for his counter-revolutionary purposes.

Marx explains how this was possible.

> "Bonaparte represents the class, the class of those who form a considerable majority in French society, the peasantry.
>
> "Just as the Bourbons were the dynasty of the great landlords, and just as the July monarchy was the dynasty of money, so the Bonapartes are the dynasty of the peasants, the small holders who form the bulk of the French population. Not the Bonaparte who threw himself at the feet of the bourgeois parliament but the Bonaparte who gave the bourgeois parliament the key of the street, is chosen of the peasantry."

Marx explains further how it was possible, that the peasantry, who was rebelling against the bourgeoisie rule, was turning to Bonaparte, as their leader. He says:

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> "Insofar as millions of families live in economic circumstances which distinguish their mode of life, their interests, and their culture from those of other classes, and make them more or less hostile to other classes, the peasant families form a class. But insofar as the tie between the peasants is merely one of propinquity, and insofar as the identity of their interests has failed to find expression in a community, in a national association, or in a political organization, the peasant families do not form a class. They are therefore, unable to assert their class interests in their own name, whether through parliament or through a congress. They cannot represent themselves, and must be represented."

Here Marx gives an excellent analysis of the historical inclination of the peasantry towards the monarchical form of government. Marx concludes this description by stating:

> "Consequently, the political influence of the peasants finds its last expression in an executive which subordinates society to its *own autocratic will.*"

In the light of the Marxian analysis regarding the inability of the peasantry to represent itself, and its inclination to look towards the "Chief of State," who may represent it and protect it against the other interests, we see somewhat of a parallel in the recent representation of the reactionary farm leaders of America, to give dictatorial power to President Roosevelt, to deal with the agrarian relief.

But let there be no mistake that Marx considered the peasantry as a whole, as one reactionary and counter-revolutionary class. This he made very clear. Marx drew very clear the line between conservative and the revolutionary trends among the French peasantry. He says:

> "The Bonaparte dynasty does not represent the revolutionary peasant, but the conservative peasant. It does not represent those among the peasantry who wish to escape from the narrow conditions of their farming life; ot represents those who wish to perpetuate and consolidate these conditions. *It does not represent that part of the rural population which, instinct with energy, wishes to join forces with the townfolk for the overthrow of the old order.*" (My emphasis—H. P.)

Here, too, we can see how true this Marxian analysis holds for the present situation among the American farmers. While the reactionary representatives of the big farmers are petitioning dictatorial powers for President Roosevelt, as a way out of the agrarian crisis, hundreds of thousands of toiling farmers of America are relying on their organized mass power, fighting against the

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evictions from their homes, demanding immediate relief, and joining their forces with the city proletariat, in their common struggles against capitalism.

Marx draws a clear line between the interests of the exploited peasantry and of the bourgeoisie, demonstrating clearly that only in the city proletariat do the peasants find their natural ally and leader. He says:

> "At the beginning of the century [the 19th] the bourgeois system of society placed the State as sentinel in front of the newly created petty land-holdings and manured their soil with laurels. Today, that same bourgeois system has become a vampire that sucks the blood and marrow from the peasants' little farms, and throws them into the alembic of capital. The Code Napoleon [which was to have given the land in permanence to the peasants] is now nothing more than the warrant for distraints and forced sales."

Marx deals with the evolution of bourgeois society, showing the development of the conflict of interests between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry, and the historic necessity for the latter to join heir forces with the city proletariat. Marx declares:

> "The result is, that the interests of the peasants no longer coincide, as during the reign of the first Napoleon, with the interests capital. There is now a conflict of interest. *The peasants, therefore, find their natural allies and leaders in the urban proletariat, whose mission it is to subvert the bourgeois order of society.*" (My emphasis—H. P.)

Thus Marx conditions the peasant liberation from the yoke of capital upon the alliance with the city proletariat. Marx repeated this teaching in different words in his letter to Engels (August 16, 1856), placing the hope for the victorious proletarian revolution in Germany on the simultaneous uprising of the peasantry. In that letter he wrote:

> "Everything in Germany will depend upon whether it will be possible to support the proletarian revolution by something like a second edition of the Peasant War. Only then will everything proceed well."

Marx dealt with the fundamentals of the peasant question and its relations to the class struggles, especially in its relation to the proletarian revolution.

Lenin, and after him Stalin, have developed these teachings of Marx and his co-worker Engels, further, into more concrete forms, particularly in relation to the national colonial liberation move-

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ments and to the period of the proletarian dictatorship and socialist construction. The Russian Revolution has proved the correctness of the Marxian teachings in practice, as developed by Lenin, regarding the necessity to win over the toiling peasantry as a revolutionary ally of the proletariat, against the bourgeoisie and the kulaks, in the struggle for power.

Our Party, the Party of the revolutionary proletariat, which is preparing to lead the victorious proletarian revolution in America for the conquest of political power, must translate the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, into the practical slogans of struggles, to mobilize in the course of joint struggles, great masses of the exploited farmers in America, into the revolutionary alliance with the proletariat. In the United States our Party has a special problem of winning not only white toiling farmers, but winning over the millions of Negro share croppers and tenants in the Black Belt, by linking up the Negro liberation struggle with the proletarian revolutionary movement.

The thesis of the Second Congress of the Communist International points out the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat in its relation to the peasantry:

> "The proletariat becomes a truly revolutionary class, truly socialistic in its actions, only by acting as the vanguard of all those who work and are being exploited, as the leader in the struggle for the overthrow of the oppressors. This cannot be achieved without carrying the class struggle into the country, without making the laboring masses of the country all gather around the city proletariat, without the peasantry's being educated by the city proletariat."

Our Party has made a good beginning along this line by inspiring and leading the hundreds of thousands of American ruined farmers in the militant struggles against their exploiters. But we must acquire a deeper understanding of Marxist-Leninist teachings on the peasant question, in order to be prepared fully to utilize the excellent possibilities that the present upsurge among the American farmers offers us, to build the revolutionary alliance between the city workers and the toiling farmers against American imperialism.

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The American Economic Crisis

A Monthly Review by JOHN IRVING

FOR nearly four years, up to the inauguration of Franklin Roosevelt, the waves of a raging economic crisis had been pounding at the foundation of the banking structure of this country. For some two or more years the "banking and industrial leaders," through their State apparatus, attempted to stave off the collapse of this structure while its very foundations were being washed away. With rare historical irony the collapse came as the "New Deal" President was being inaugurated.

This crisis in American banking pitilessly revealed the fiction that American capitalism is still in the stage of "rugged individualism." Already with the creation of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and by the Glass-Steagall Act, government credit became openly involved in the machinations of American finance capital. With loans advanced by the R. F. C. to the railroads *to pay the banks*, with R. F. C. loans made directly to the banks, with the granting of the privilege to the commercial banks, under the Glass-Steagall Act, to rediscount in the Federal Reserve banks "sound" assets other than heretofore eligible for rediscount, the government had inextricably compounded its own solvency with that of the essentially insolvent banking credit in order to maintain the hegemony of finance capital over American industry. Of this we often have spoken in our earlier *Reviews*. Now, under the "Emergency Banking Act," that involvement has become complete. Under this act, rushed through under the pressure of withheld patronage, new currency may be issued up to 90% of the "estimated value" of any notes, drafts, bills of exchange or bankers' acceptances" proferred by the bankers, and dollar for dollar for government bonds and other government securities. The total of these commercial "assets" thus made available as a basis for this new national currency, plus the governmental obligations, runs into tens of billions of dollars and *the maximum of the currency ultimately thus to be manufactured is not specified*. The sky's the limit. The initial issue was limited to $2,000,000,000.

To prevent a renewed run on the banks for what gold was left after the pre-banking holiday run, to prevent the hoarding of "sound" currencies of the old issues, hoarding was declared

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punishable by law and restrictions on gold payments were imposed. The latter was virtually an embargo on gold exports as well as on domestic payments inasmuch as the Secretary of the Treasury was endowed with the discretionary power to prohibit any and all shipments of gold abroad. Later was to come "constructive" banking legislation,—branch banking, deposit insurance, "nationalizing" of the banks, that is, compelling all commercial banks to operate under a federal charter and become members of the Federal Reserve System, etc. In the meanwhile, certain other "steps . . . of definite constructive importance in our economic recovery" (according to the President's message of March 16) were to be taken; such, for instance, the Farm Relief Bill.

But the Emergency Banking Act failed to act. "Remember," said Mr. Roosevelt in his radio talk on March 12, "that the essential accomplishment of the new [banking] legislation is that it makes it possible for banks more readily to convert their assets into cash than was the case before."

But it didn't. Because, *parallel with the provision for this new currency and credit, came the destruction of the demand for it.* The permanent closing of some 20% of the banks of the country, resulting in the impounding of some five to six billion dollars of deposits, depressed the productive activities of the country, and, therefore, the demand for credit, to the lowest levels of the crisis to date. Thus, the business activity index of the *Annalist* for the week ending March 18, reached the record low of 47.9; the previous low of last summer, stood at 52.2. For the month as a whole the March index reached to 53.0 from the 56.3 of the preceding month (the previous low of 52.0 was recorded for last July). The all-embracing measure of business activity—debits to individual accounts—that is, commercial checking accounts, even as late as mid-April are running some 33% below a year ago. In Detroit the decline for the week ended April 17 amounted to 87.3%! *Total payrolls* compiled by the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for March fell to the *lowest index for the crisis to date*, 33.4, compared with 100 for the year 1926. *This amounted to a drop of* 6.7% *below the previous low set up in January this year. Employment*, with an index for March of 55.1, was 0.2% *below the previous low set up last July.*

The first attempt at inflation resulted in a more widespread deflation.

2) As the first of his "constructive . . . steps to our economic recovery", the president "struck to the heart of the panic, carrying through an economy measure vital to maintain confidence in the currency," to quote the April *Letter* of the National City Bank.

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It is Roosevelt's way of balancing the budet." Not by raising more revenues from the surplus of the wealthiest classes, but by "economy" measures. By reducing the civilian personnel of the government and by cutting the wages of those remaining, and by deducting $400,000,000 from the pensions due to the war veterans. By reducing the purchasing power of the American worker-consumer by another billion dollars a year. Another deflationary measure.

3) Then came Mr. Roosevelt's first major "constructive" step, the Farm Relief Bill.

"At the same time that you and I are joining in emergency action to bring order to our banks, and to make our regular federal expenditures balance our income, I deem it of equal importance to take other . . . steps . . . One of these . . . relates to agriculture . . ." which, among other things, "*seeks . . . to increase the asset value of farm loans made by our banking institutions.*" (From the President's message to Congress on the Farm Relief Bill.) Lenin in his *Imperialism*, speaking of the possible competition of postal savings with private banking, says to the private banker, never fear, the "state monopoly in a capitalist society is never anything else than a means of *guaranteeing* the income of millionaires who are on the point of going bankrupt in one branch of industry or another." (p. 26, italics mine, J. I.) The Roosevelt "Farm Relief" Bill, as well as his emergency banking bill, is aimed to *guarantee*, to safeguard the interests of the predatory creditor class at the expense of the city worker and mortgage farmer. For this Farm Relief Bill is nothing less than a sales tax on the food and clothing of the city proletariat, imposed through a wholesale bribe to the farmer to produce less so that the price of his produces may be raised. The rise of farm commodity prices would be reflected in a rise in farm property values, would raise the value of farm mortgages, would add to the solvency of the mortgagees—the bankers. There is not a word about lowering the prices of the commodities which the farmer has to purchase, the prices of monopoly goods—of the fuels, fertilizer materials, building materials, agricultural implements, and other goods which the farmer must purchase with his reduced income but which have been maintained at close to pre-depression levels. Consider the following figures:

Compared with the common base of 100 (average for 1926) the following wholesale price index obtained in March, 1933—the latest available at this writing—for the commodities the farmer sells and for some that he buys:

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Commodity	*Index*
The farmer sells:	
Farm products	42.8
The farmer buys:	
Boots and shoes	83.2
Clothing	61.3
Bituminous coal	79.3
Electricity	102.9*
Gas	96.6*
Agricultural implements	83.1
Motor vehicles (tractors)	90.9
Building materials	70.3
Fertilizer materials	61.9
Mixed fertilizer	60.1
House furnishing goods	72.2

This, then, is why the farmer's dollar today is worth only about 43 cents compared with half-dozen years ago. In other words, if *fewer* bushels of wheat were necessary to buy a tractor than are now required, the purchasing power of the farmer's commodities would be higher.

But of that there is not a word in the President's message. Instead the proposal is made to raise farm prices toward these monopoly prices through a subsidy to be paid by the city workers. This subsidy to the farmer would take the form of a tax, on the basis of the "domestic allotment" and marginal land rent plans,[1] and would run into hundreds of millions of dollars a year. The collection of this tax is turned over to the "processors"—to the cotton manufacturers, to the flour miller, the meat packer. These, as anyone familiar with the theory of the shifting and incidence of taxation knows, will reap a new harvest of profits. The tax will be shifted to the original producer—the farmer—by discounting the tax in the price paid to him. Then the price of the "processed product" to the consumer, the city proletariat, will be raised to the amount of the tax (and more, because the retail mark-up is now figured on a higher base) which the processors have to turn over to the government. The excess which they conceal in the selling price of the cloth, the bread, the meat, is that much additional profit to the processor. Inasmuch, finally, as all the com-

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* February, 1933.

[1] Essentially, this consists of reducing the total output of the major farm crops to the demand of the domestic market. This alone should presumably raise the prices of these commodities. But in addition the farmer is supposed to benefit by the tax collected by the processors, or by rents the government would pay out of these taxes for the land withdrawn from production. The objective is a farmer commodity price level equivalent to its 1909-14 purchasing power over non-agricultural commodities.

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modities subject to this tax are necessities, the demand for which is inelastic, it means that workers will either buy less of each of them—and the farmer will be no better off than he is now—or will use up so much more of his wages on his food and clothing that he will have less left to purchase other consumption goods and the deflation in these other commodities will set in.

Thus, with the confusion and contradictions characteristic of capitalist economics, bill after bill has been proposed or passed by "our new leaders" at Washington, each nullifying the other, each aiming at inflation but precipitating further deflation, each aiming to "pull us out of the crisis" and each leading to its further intensification. For whether it is through inflation or deflation that capitalism seeks a way out of the crisis it can do so only at the expense of the worker. Falling prices under capitalism means further increases in unemployment, further wage cuts, further terrorization of the workers. Inflationary rising prices mean falling purchasing power of wages and the deterioration of the standard of living of the worker, of the farm laborer and of the poor and middle farmer. Deflation has meant the loss of the small saving of the workers through the failure and closing of the banks, the failure of building loan associations, and the foreclosure of their homes on which they had been paying from their meager earnings all their lives. Inflation will mean the wiping out of the equities of their insurance policies, and of all other savings that they may still have claim to after four years of unemployment and wage cuts and bank failures.

At this stage of the crisis capitalism is turning to inflation to find a way out. According to the bourgeois economists, not until commodity and security price levels are raised sufficiently high to ensure new business profits will the "banking and industrial leaders" start the wheel of business turning again. Mr. Roosevelt's efforts have failed to bring about these desired results. The capitalist government, turns now to direct measures of inflation.

On April 15, some 40 senators voted in favor of remonetizing silver. By April 18, the American dollar was worth about 88 cents on the European exchanges. On the 19th, the United States officially went off the gold standard, "for the present" a *New York Times* headline of the 20th assures us. Its headline on April 21 reads: *"Senate Gets Bill For 'Controlled' Inflation . . . Stocks and Commodities Continue to Soar."*

Thus, after four years of dismissals and wage cuts comes the additional attack on the American worker—by cheapening his wage dollar further to decrease his standard of living, to reduce him to a stage of peonage, as the capitalist way out of the crisis.

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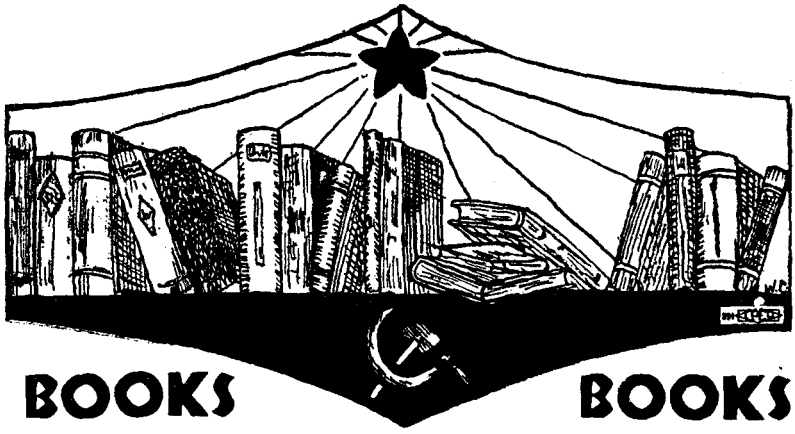

NEW LENIN VOLUMES

"TOWARDS THE SEIZURE OF POWER," Collected Works, Vol. XXI. Books I and II

The Revolution of 1917: *from the July Days to the October Revolution*

Reviewed by MOISSAYE J. OLGIN*

The present volume, consisting of two books, comprises the second half of the articles, pamphlets and treatises written by Lenin between the second and the third Russian revolution, i.e. between March and November, 1917. The first half is contained in an another volume, previously published in English, also in two books, under the title *The Revolution of* 1917 (Collected Works, Vol. XX).

The division of the material in these two volumes is not made arbitrarily. Volume XX and volume XXI deal with different periods of the Revolution—before and after the July 16-18 demonstrations. Lenin himself characterized these two periods as differing in this, that while up to the "July days" a peaceful passing of power into the hands of the Soviets was still possible, in the post-July days an armed uprising became the order of the day.

The fundamental ideas, which both volumes develop in application to varying situations, are contained in the first few pieces that Lenin wrote immediately after the March revolution, almost at the very time when the revolution was taking place. Already on March 17, in a letter to A. M. Kollontai, Lenin writes: "Spread out! Arouse new strata! Awaken new initiative, form new organizations in every layer, and *prove* to them that *peace* can come only with the armed Soviet of workers' deputies in power." The program of Soviet power was thus advanced almost at the very moment when the revolution broke out. In a "Draft of Theses" written March 17th Lenin analyzes the new provisional government as unable to bring either peace or bread and concludes:

> "It is necessary to organize Soviets of Workers' Deputies and to arm the workers; it is necessary to carry proletarian organization into the army . . . and into the village; it is particularly necessary to have a separate class-organization of hired agricultural workers.

*Comrade Olgin translated these volumes from the Russian.

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> "Only when the largest possible masses of the population are enlightened, only when they are organized, can complete victory of the next stage of the revolution and the conquest of power by a workers' government be secured."

It is in the struggle for a workers' government that the four books included in these two volumes were written.

The task is stated in the concluding passage of the first of the "Letters from Afar," written March 20th:

> "Hand in hand with these two allies [the peasantry in Russia and the workers in other countries], the proletariat of Russia can and will proceed, while utilizing the peculiarities of the present transition moment, to win, first, a democratic republic and the victory of the peasantry over the landlords, then Socialism, which alone can give peace, bread, and freedom to the peoples exhausted by the war."

In thus formulating the tasks of the revolution Lenin was not making any turn in the line pursued both by the Bolshevik party and by its leaders. Lenin was only advocating the realization of a program worked out as early as 1905 and, by Lenin himself, much earlier. The possibility and necessity of a bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into a socialist revolution was the foundation of the Bolshevik theory and tactics for many years prior to 1917.

Since this is denied by Mr. Trotsky, it is necessary to say a few words about the matter.

Trotsky's thesis is advanced in the following words:

> "From the year 1905 the Bolshevik party had waged a struggle against the autocracy under the slogan 'Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Peasantry.' This slogan as well as its theoretical background derives from Lenin. In opposition to the Mensheviks, whose theoretician, Plekhanov, stubbornly opposed the 'mistaken idea of the possibility of accomplishing a bourgeois revolution without the bourgeoisie,' Lenin considered that the Russian bourgeoisie was already incapable of leading its own revolution. Only the proletariat and peasantry in close union could carry through a democratic revolution against the monarchy and the landlords. The victory of this union, according to Lenin, should inaugurate a democratic dictatorship, which was not only not identical with the dictatorship of the proletariat, but was in sharp contrast to it, for its problem was not the creation of a socialist society, nor even the creation of forms of transition to such a society, but merely a ruthless cleansing of the Augean stables of medievalism. The goal of the revolutionary struggles was fully described in three militant slogans: Democratic Republic, Confiscation of the Landed Estates, Eight-Hour Working Day—colloquially called the three whales of Bolshevism." (Leon Trotsky—*History of the Russian Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 314.)

Every sentence of this declaration is just the opposite of historical truth and only reveals Trotsky as what he is—a falsifier of history.

Trotsky knows that if anything is commonly known about the Bolsheviks prior to 1917, it is their theory of the hegemony of the proletariat in the

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revolution. Trotsky therefore hastens to explain this away in the following words:

> "To speak of the leading role of the proletariat in the bourgeois revolution did not at all signify that the proletariat would use the peasant uprising in order with its support to place upon the order of the day its own historic task—that is, the direct transition to a socialist society . . . the Bolshevik party had been educated in these ideas ever since the spring of 1905." (Ibid. p. 315.)

Maybe Lenin himself had a better understanding of the immediate transition from a bourgeois-democratic revolution to a Socialist revolution? Trotsky says, no. "Lenin himself," he declares, "did not replace the formula of democratic dictatorship by any other formula, even conditional or hypothetical, until the very beginning of the February revolution. Was he correct in this? We think not." (Ibid. p. 318.)

The historical truth is that throughout all his revolutionary course, almost from the very beginning of his activities, Lenin had before his eyes and advocated the transition from a bourgeois-democratic revolution to a socialist revolution. Already in 1894, in winding up his treatise on the Narodniks, entitled, "Who are the Friends of the People," in which he analyzes the role of the proletariat, as "the only and the natural representative of the toiling and exploited population of Russia" and as the one "whose very situation in the general system of capitalist relations makes it the only fighter for the liberation of the working class, because only the higher stage of the development of capitalism, large-scale machine industry, creates material conditions and social forces necessary for this struggle," Lenin says:

> "When its (the proletariat's) advanced representatives will have acquired the idea of scientific socialism, the idea of the historical role of the Russian worker, when those ideas will have become widespread, and there will be created among the workers firm organizations which transform the present sporadic economic struggles of the workers into a conscious class struggle—then the Russian *worker*, having risen at the head of all the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism and lead the *Russian proletariat* (hand in hand with the proletariat of *all countries*) on the straight road of open political struggle to a *victorious Communist revolution.*"

Eleven years before the *first* Russian revolution Lenin advanced the idea of the democratic revolution leading to a socialist revolution.

More decisively is this idea stressed in the "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in a Democratic Revolution," where Lenin formulates the task of the proletariat in the following words:

> "*The proletariat must complete the democratic overthrow by attaching to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of autocracy and to paralyze the instability of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must accomplish the Socialist overthrow by attaching to itself the mass of semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyze the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie.*" (Written in June, 1905.)

Here the revolution is presented as consisting of two intimately connected

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phases, one following from the others. It seems that the "three whales" mentioned by Trotsky were *not* those of Bolshevism and that the "cleansing of the Augean stables of medievalism" was *not* the sole aim of the revolution according to Lenin. It seems also that when Trotsky says that "to speak of the leading role of the proletariat in the bourgeois revolution did not at all signify (to the Bolsheviks) that the proletariat would use the peasant uprising in order with its support to place upon the order of the day its own historic task—that is, the direct transition to a socialist society," the gentleman is simply lying. Lenin repeatedly stressed that the proletariat must ally itself with the peasantry precisely in order to be able to accomplish the Socialist revolution.

Did Lenin, perhaps, think of a very long stretch of time lying between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the Socialist revolution? This is what Lenin wrote in September of 1905:

> "We are in favor of an unceasing revolution. We will not stop in the middle of the road. . . . With all our powers will we aid the entire peasantry to make a democratic revolution in order that we, the Party of the proletariat, may the *easier be able* to pass as quickly as possible to the new and higher task—Socialist revolution." ("Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats.")

This idea was a *foundation stone of Leninism*. Lenin emphasizes it over and over again. Thus in his article, "Two Lines of the Revolution," (written November 20, 1915, he reaffirms the passing from one revolution to the other *immediately*. In that article he polemizes against Trotsky's failing to understand the role of the peasantry in the revolution. Lenin ridicules Trotsky's theory of the "permanent revolution" which he terms "original" in qoutation marks. Lenin says that "in practice Trotsky aids the liberal labor politicians in Russia who by the 'negation' of the role of peasantry understand a refusal to arouse the peasants to a revolution!" Lenin then concludes:

> "This, however, is the core of the question at present. The proletariat is fighting, and will valiantly fight, for the conquest of power, for a republic, for land confiscation, which means for attracting the peastntry, for making full use of its revolutionary powers, for the participation of the '*non*-proletarian people's masses' in freeing *bourgeois* Russia from *military feudal* imperialism (tsarism). This liberation of bourgeois Russia from tsarism, from the land power of the landowners, the proletariat will *immediately* utilize, not to aid the prosperous peasants in their struggle against the village workers, but to complete a Socialist revolution in alliance with the proletariat of Europe." (Lenin, Vol. XVIII, *The Imperialist War*, English translation, p. 363.)

Did Lenin "replace the formula of democratic dictatorship by any other formula?" Was the Bolshevik Party "educated in these ideas" that the hegemony of the proletariat in the democratic revolution was not to lead to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, as Trotsky brazenly asserts?

Trotsky falsifies history. To prove that his erroneous idea about "permanent revolution," an idea lashed by Lenin's ridicule more than once—as it led Trotsky to the assertion, in Lenin's words, that "a 'national' revolution is impossible in Russia," to justify his errors which have been proven

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as errors by decades of history, Trotsky writes a "history" which has very little resemblance to the actual historic facts.

But we shall have yet an occasion to return to Trotsky's interpretation of the revolution—and himself. Let us pass to the volume, *Towards the Seizure of Power*.

> "The cycle of the development of class and party struggle in Russia, from March 12 to July 17, is completed. A new cycle begins, into which enter not the old classes, not the old parties, not the old Soviets, but such as have renovated in the fire of struggle, hardened, enriched with knowledge, recreated in the course of the struggle."

This is how Lenin characterizes the situation that had arisen in Russia after the days of July 16-18. Those days, the student of the Revolution will remember, were days of a momentous outburst of mass protests against the Provisional Government headed by Kerensky. Hundreds of thousands of workers and soldiers, partly armed, walked into the streets demanding "All Power To The Soviets." The Bolsheviks themselves bent every effort to prevent the demonstration from becoming a spontaneous uprising because they realized that an uprising could not be successful at that time. The Provisional Government let loose a reign of terror against the Bolsheviks accusing them of high treason and organizing a special political trial against them. Many Bolsheviks were arrested, went into hiring; Bolshevik papers were suppressed, and Lenin himself had to live under cover in the outskirts of Petrograd, part of the time disguised as a farm hand. It is in such circumstances that Lenin wrote the articles and tracts comprising the present volume. And it is to this changed situation after the July days that he refers in the above passage.

Here, incidentally, we have an example of Lenin's analysis of a situation. Crystal-clear, decisive, brief, taking in every aspect, formulating a most complicated situation in a few terse phrases.

What is the essence of the new situation?

> "The essence of the matter is that at present power can no longer be seized peacefully. It can be obtained only after a victory in a decisive struggle against the real holders of power at the present moment, namely, the military clique, the Cavaignacs, who rely on the reactionary troops brought to Petrograd, on the Cadets, and on the Monarchists.
>
> "The essence of the matter is that those new holders of state power can be defeated only by the revolutionary masses of the people, whose movement depends not only on their having a proletarian leadership, but also on their turning away from the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, which had betrayed the cause of the revolution."

Before the July days, the slogan was "All Power to the Soviets." It indicated that the Soviets could take power if they wished to. It indicated that there was nothing in the way of the Soviets' seizing power, expect their illusions of peaceful cooperation with the Provisional Government which was termed "revolutionary." Now all this was passed.

> "The slogan of the power passing to the Soviets would at present sound quixotic or mocking. Objectively, the slogan would be a deception of the people. It would spread among it the illusion that

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> to seize power, the Soviets even *now* have only to wish to decree it; that there are still parties in the Soviet which have not been tainted by aiding the hangmen; that one can undo what has happened."

And further:

> "Soviets can and must appear in this new revolution, but *not* the present Soviets, not organs of compromise with the bourgeoisie, but organs of a revolutionary struggle against it. That even then we shall be in favor of building the whole state after the Soviet type, is true. This is not a question of Soviets in general, it is a question of struggle against the *present* counter-revolution and against the *treachery* of the *present* Soviets."

In these few passages is indicated the decisiveness and the fearlessness of the analysis carried out by Lenin throughout those historic months. The whole volume, divided into two books, is a living history of the road to power of the Bolshevik Party. It records every turn in the road, every phase of the vastly complicated political situation, it shows how the revolutionary party sharpened its ideological weapon, how it approached the masses of workers, peasants, soldiers; how by the use of the correct and incisive slogans, it gained the confidence of a majority of the people; how it transformed its activities from the "weapon of criticism" to a "criticism of the weapons"; how it began to propound the idea of insurrection as an art, how it carried out this idea in practice, until that memorable night of November 7, when, after a victorious revolution, after the arrest of the Provisional Government (Kerensky the chatterbox having fled before with the intention of meeting his "loyal" troops whom he never met), after the seizure of the Winter Palace when the city was secured in the hands of the revolution, Lenin appeared on the rostrum of the Smolny Institute and in simple words, without ostentation, opened the Second Congress of the Soviets, which organized the Soviet Government that is in power to the present day.

It is a momentous volume. It is very difficult to point out what is most significant in these writings. Every line is significant. Every note is so much Leninism, so much the Bolshevik Party in action, so full of meaning for every revolutionist, so instructive to Communist working today in any country in the world, that the reviewer is at a loss. One can only say to every worker: Read these books. They are not only history of the revolution, they are shot through with revolutionary passion, they are borne on a high wave of tense revolutionary feeling.

Despite the fact that he was in hiding, Lenin was not only the theoretician, but the organizer and leader of the revolution. He conferred with scores and hundreds of revolutionists coming into his hiding place and bringing with them the tempestuous sentiments of those days. He gave direction to Bolshevik activities and actually shaped the course of the revolution. He was the guiding spirit of the Central Committee of the Communist Party which was in control of the whole situation.

Those pages are alive. Besides being a record of the revolution, they are excellent reading. They are absorbing. Their characterizations are immortal. Some of the remarks made casually stand out as classical political epigrams.

"Will the Bolsheviks retain state power?" he asks in one of the major tracts of these books. He refutes a number of arguments advanced to prove the contrary. One of the arguments was that "circumstances are excep-

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tionally complicated." Answering this argument, and analyzing it point by point, Lenin cannot refrain from exclaiming:

> "Oh! wiseacres! They are prepared perhaps to tolerate revolution, but without 'exceptionally complicated circumstances.'"

Having explained that such revolutions never occur, and that the yearnings after such revolutions are nothing but the reactionary lamentations of the bourgeois intellectual, Lenin flings another remark:

> "If there were no exceptionally complicated circumstances, there would be no revolution. If you fear wolves, do not go into the forest."

Lenin's sense of humor, or rather his sense of scorn towards his enemies, his satirical disdain for all the waverings of the petty-bourgeois leaders, is becoming the more poignant as the atmosphere becomes more charged with storm.

The following characterization of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, fits excellently their present confreres of the Norman Thomas type.

> "No matter how sincere individual S.-R.'s and Mensheviks may be, their fundamental political ideas—as though it is possible to get out of an imperialist war and arrive at a 'peace without annexations and indemnities' without a dictatorship of the proletariat and a victory of Socialism, as though it is possible to have the land pass to the people without compensation and to have control over production in the interests of the people without the above condition—these fundamental political (and, of course, also economic) ideas of the S. R.'s and Mensheviks represent, objectively, nothing but a petty-bourgeois self-deception or, what is the same, a deception of the masses (the 'majority') by the bourgeoisie."

Step by step, Lenin follows the various organized forces battling against, and marching towards, the Revolution. Over and over again he draws a socio-political picture of the country and of the world. The very names of the articles indicate the trend of his activities: "Where is Power and Where is Counter-Revolution"; "The Political Situation"; "On Slogans"; "On Constitutional Illusions";"The Beginning of Bonapartism"; "Lessons of the Revolution"; "On the Stockholm Conference"; "Peasants and Workers"; "Elections to the Constituent Asembly"; and so on ,and so forth, up to and including the major works of the present volume, "The Threatening Catastrophe and How to Fight It," "Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?" and that classic of Marxist teaching of the state, "State and Revolution."

Events are moving fast. Changes occur within a day. Lenin, living as he does outside of Petrograd, with no direct contact with the masses, keeps his finger on the pulse of events. At the same time, he keeps on elucidating the meaning of Soviet power, the future practice of the Soviet State, the advantages of a Soviet economy over bourgeois economy.

One must keep in mind that all this was written *before* there ever existed a Soviet State. One must remember that all the practical experiences Lenin had in his possession to base his deductions upon were the experiences of the Paris Commune and the few weeks of Soviet existence in 1905. When you read, however, those writings of Lenin produced on the eve of the seizure

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of power, you almost think that you are reading a history of what happened when the Soviet State had become a historic reality.

Consider the following characterization of the Soviets:

> "The entire history of the bourgeois parliamentary countries shows that a change of Ministers means very little, for the real work of administration is in the hands of an enormous army of officials. This army, however, is saturated, through and through, with an anti-democratic spirit; it is connected by thousands and millions of threads with the landowners and the bourgeoisie, and it depends upon them in every way. This army is surrounded by an atmosphere of bourgeois relations; it breathes only this atmosphere; it is inert, petrified, fossilized; it has not the power to extricate itself from this atmosphere; it cannot think, feel, or act otherwise than in the old way. This army is bound by the relations of rank worship, by certain privileges of 'state service,' while the upper ranks of this army are, through the medium of stocks and banks, entirely enslaved by finance capital, being to some degree its agent, the vehicle of its interests and influence."

An excellent characterization of official Washington, or for that matter, official Albany, or any other of the 48 state capitals.

As against this ornate but fossilized agency of finance capital, Lenin advances the Soviets as the actual government of the people. Be it remembered that the Soviets then in existence were S.-R. and Menshevik ridden; that they were cooperating with the hangman Kerensky; that, in Lenin's words, it was necessary to fight "against the treachery of the present Soviets." Still, Lenin's confidence in the Soviets *as the new type* of State apparatus was unbounded.

> "The Soviets of Workers' Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are particularly valuable because they represent a new *type* of State apparatus, which is immeasurably higher, incomparably more democratic. The S.-R.'s and Mensheviks have done everything, possible and impossible, to turn the Soviets... into useless talking shops which, under the guise of 'control,' busy themselves with passing useless resolutions and wishes, which the government shelves with the most polite and kindly smile. But the 'fresh breeze' of the Kornilov affair [attempt as seizing power by the Commander in Chief of the Army, General Kornilov, early in September with the purpose of establishing a bourgeois military dictatorship], which promised a real storm, was sufficient to dispel for a time all that was musty in the Soviets, and the situation of the revolutionary masses began to assert itself as something majestic, powerful, invincible."

All the revolutionary fire of Lenin's attack is directed against the Socialist-Revolutionists and Mensheviks who had become a shield to cover before the eyes of the masses the counter-revolutionary plots of the bourgeoisie. The S.-R.' and Mensheviks were imploring the Constitutional Democrats and the other representatives of the bourgeoisie and landowners to be good enough and keep power in their hands in a coalition government, making it appear that without bourgeois guidance the country would perish. The bourgeois members of the Provisional Government, in order to wrest from the petty-bourgeois leaders more concessions for the ruling

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classes, staged one "governmental crisis" after another, throwing the petty-bourgeois leaders into a state of fright.

> "Treacherous and criminal is the conduct of the constitutional democratic arty," says a resolution of the Mensheviks passed immediately after the July events, "which, not wishing to submit to the demands of democracy, have preferred to relinquish power, to leave revolutionary democracy, which has not yet been sufficiently organized and sufficiently strengthened, and particularly the proletariat, alone in the struggle against economic disorder and strengthening counter-revolution. Equally treacherous and criminal is the conduct of the industrialists who secretly aid the disorganization of economic life, in order finally to weaken the working class and dictate to it their conditions."

The Mensheviks found no other way out than to beg the agents of the capitalists and landlords to stay in a coalition government in order not to leave the poor proletariat alone, because they would not know how to manage the affiairs of the state.

In the same appeal, the Mensheviks, speaking to the workers, exclaimed emphatically:

> "We Menshevik Social-Democrats have all the time warned you, comrade workers, about the perniciousness of the tactics of the Leninists and Anarchists. You have now realized that we are right."

As against these appeals to the bourgeois parties and to the industrialists to help the proletariat face impending economic disaster, Lenin advances the very simple but very effective program of what has to be done immediately to avert a threatening catastrophe:

> "Here are those principle measures:
>
> "1. Unification of all banks into one; state control over its operations, or nationalization of the banks.
>
> "2. Nationalization of syndicates, i.-e. the largest monopoly associations of the capitalists (the sugar, naphtha, coal, metallurgical syndicates, etc.).
>
> "3. Abolition of commercial secrets.
>
> "4. Compulsory syndication (i.-e. compulsory unification into associations) of industrialists, merchants, and employers in general.
>
> "5. Compulsory organization of the population into consumers' associations; or encouragement of such unification and the control over them."

All this could not be carried out by the Provisional Government; it could not be carried out by any capitalist government; it could only be carried out by the Soviets.

(*To be concluded*)

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